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SC to appoint VCs if Kerala CM & Guv don't resolve tiff

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ED attaches assets worth Rs 1,120 cr against Reliance

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India hopes for another 'Ro-Ko' show

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Will supply uninterrupted oil to India: Putin defies US

PM says India is not neutral over Ukraine, is on side of peace

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow is ready to provide "uninterrupted shipments" of fuel to India, as Delhi faces pressure from the US to stop buying Russian oil.

Putin, speaking alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi, questioned why India should be punished for buying oil when the US itself buys nuclear fuel from Moscow.

"Russia is a reliable supplier of energy resources... We are ready to continue ensuring the uninterrupted supply of fuel for the rapidly growing Indian economy," Putin. The assurance comes months after US President Donald Trump imposed an additional 25 per cent import tariff on India, accusing it of undercutting sanctions through purchases of discounted Russian crude.

Modi did not reference oil directly but said energy security remained "a strong and important pillar" of India–Russia relations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks on as Russian President Vladimir Putin signs a visitor's book at Hyderabad House **PHOTO: PTI**

The two leaders formalised a five-year roadmap to strengthen trade and economic cooperation, even as both countries face sustained Western pressure over Russia's war in Ukraine and India's continued engagement with Moscow.

During their first in-person meeting in four years, and Putin's first visit to India since the Ukraine conflict began in 2022, Modi reiterated that the war must be resolved through dialogue.

"We welcome all efforts towards a peaceful and lasting resolution," he said.

Putin's visit comes as the US holds a series of talks with Russia and Ukraine in an attempt to broker a peace deal to end the war.

Both sides finalised the India–Russia Economic Cooperation Programme 2030, with plans to deepen engagement in trade, energy, defence, health, mobility and critical minerals. Russia and India also reiterated their commitment to concluding a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) at the earliest. They also agreed to continue working towards enhancing the settlement of bilateral trade in the national currencies of the two countries. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 & 5

Passengers wait in queues to enquire about flight status at Chennai Airport amid IndiGo flight disruptions on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

DGCA rolls back pilot rest norms as IndiGo cancels 1,000 flights

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 5 DEC

- Reports indicated over 500 cancellations across the country. Bengaluru recorded at least 102 cancellations.

IndiGo cancelled more than 1,000 flights on Friday, triggering nationwide disruption as airports struggled with mounting chaos for the fourth consecutive day. India's largest airline, which operates around 2,300 flights daily, said normal operations are expected to resume within 10 days after the DGCA granted temporary relaxation in flight duty time limitation (FDTL) norms.

Delhi Airport confirmed that 225 IndiGo flights were cancelled by morning, and the airline later suspended all departures from the capital until midnight. Reports indicated over 500 cancellations across the country. Bengaluru recorded at least 102 cancellations, while Mumbai saw 104. Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport reported 92 scrapped flights, and Chennai Airport listed over 30 cancellations, every one of them an IndiGo service.

The disruption caused severe congestion at terminals, with passengers queueing for updates and scrambling for baggage. Airfares surged on multiple routes, while social media filled with complaints and frustration.

Authorities attributed the crisis to IndiGo's inadequate preparedness for new FDTL norms, which mandate longer rest periods and limit night landings. The airline was required to comply from 1 November.

On Friday, the DGCA granted temporary exemptions for IndiGo's A320 fleet, the bulk of its aircraft, until 10 February 2026. It stressed that safety was not being compromised, noting that the relaxations were meant only to stabilise operations. The regulator will review IndiGo's corrective actions every 15 days, including crew hiring plans. Earlier, the DGCA also allowed pilot leave to count toward mandatory weekly rest, increasing crew availability.

Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu said full restoration of services is expected within three days, adding that the government has taken "urgent, proactive measures" to ease disruptions. The issue was also raised in Parliament.

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers, in his first public statement since the crisis began, apologised to passengers and said operations should normalise between 10 and 15 December. Meanwhile, InterGlobe Aviation shares slid over 7 per cent in four trading sessions amid the turmoil, erasing more than Rs 16,000 crore in market value. On Friday, the stock closed 1.22 per cent lower at Rs 5,371.30 on the BSE, after hitting an intraday low of Rs 5,266. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pgs 2, 4 & 5

6-year-old gangraped by relatives in MP

HARDA, 5 DEC

A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by two men, reportedly her relatives, in a village under Chhipabad police station, Harda district, Madhya Pradesh. The incident took place on Tuesday after the accused lured her to their home, offering snacks, and then raped her. The girl's parents were initially unaware and discovered the assault when she was in severe pain and taken to an Anganwadi worker. Following a complaint, police registered an FIR and detained both accused for questioning. *—PTI*

Pregnant woman pushed to B'desh brought back

MALDA, 5 DEC

Birbhum resident Sunali Khatun, 26, and her son Sabir were repatriated to India through the Malda border on Friday, 103 days after being jailed in Bangladesh as alleged "infiltrators". Their return followed a Supreme Court order directing the Centre to bring back Sunali and five others deported in June after Delhi Police and the FRRO declared them Bangladeshi nationals. Sunali, pregnant, was handed over around 7 pm and taken for medical checks. Four others — her husband Danesh, and Birbhum residents Sweety Bibi and her two sons — remain in Bangladesh despite the court's directive. The Supreme Court had criticised the Centre for deporting them despite evidence of Indian citizenship. *—PTI*

Aryan booked for showing middle finger in B'luru

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan has been booked after a Bengaluru-based lawyer filed a police complaint accusing him of making an obscene gesture during a public event on 28 November. A viral video showed Aryan briefly flashing his middle fingers from a restaurant balcony while greeting fans during a promotional appearance for his brand D'yavol, alongside actors Zaid Khan and Dhanya Ramkumar. The complaint, submitted to senior police officials and the Karnataka State Women's Commission, alleges the gesture "insulted the modesty" of women present and caused "public discomfort". *—PTI*

PM to lead 'Vande Mataram' debate in LS

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the debate on the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram in the Lok Sabha on 8 December, with Home Minister Amit Shah leading the discussion in the Rajya Sabha on 9 December. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and other ministers will also participate, while the final speaker in the Lok Sabha will be from the BJP. Debates on election reforms, covering all aspects including the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, will follow in both Houses from 9 to 11 December. Nearly 51 crore voters are being covered to identify foreign illegal immigrants. The Cabinet approved nationwide celebrations to mark the song's 150 years. *—PTI*

RBI cuts repo rate by 25 bps to to support 'goldilocks' economy

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

Home, auto and other loans are set to become cheaper after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday cut the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent, its first reduction in six months, while announcing a Rs 1 lakh crore liquidity infusion to shield a "goldilocks" economy from the impact of steep US tariffs.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee, led by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, voted unanimously for the rate cut and retained a neutral stance. The move aims to cushion the economy after US President Donald Trump imposed a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, triggering a fall in exports, a wider trade deficit and a record-low rupee.

This is the fourth rate cut since February 2025, totalling 125 basis points. Cheaper borrowing from the central bank is expected to push banks to reduce Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate, and base rates, making retail and corporate loans more affordable and supporting demand.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra during a

- The move aims to cushion the economy after US President Donald Trump imposed a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods, triggering a fall in exports, a wider trade deficit and a record-low rupee.

Calling the current phase a "rare goldilocks period", Malhotra noted inflation at 2.2 per cent and first-half growth at 8 per cent. The RBI raised its GDP growth forecast for 2025–26 to 7.3 per cent from 6.8 per cent after a robust 8.2 per cent Q2 expansion, the strongest in six quarters. The central bank cut its inflation forecast for the fiscal to 2 per cent from 2.6 per cent, citing rapid disinflation since October. Economists welcomed the move. Crisil's Dharmakirti Joshi said the rate cut and liquidity support underscore a growth-oriented policy, with low food and fuel inflation easing pressures. *—PTI*

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WB ON ALERT AHEAD OF 'BABRI' MOSQUE'S FOUNDATION

BAHRAMPUR, 5 DEC

A day ahead of the foundation stone-laying ceremony for a proposed mosque modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid, security was sharply intensified in Beldanga, Murshidabad, on Friday. Officials said the locality has been designated a "high-security" zone, with additional police, Rapid Action Force (RAF) and BSF personnel deployed.

The ceremony, scheduled for 6 December, is being organised by suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir, who was removed from the party on Thursday for repeatedly embarrassing the leadership. Unfazed, Kabir said the event was expected to draw nearly three lakh people to a 25-bigha site near Moradighi, with religious leaders from several states and two Saudi clerics arriving in a special convoy from Kolkata. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

SC refuses to hear TN over lamp lighting row

NEW DELHI/ CHENNAI, 5 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain Tamil Nadu's attempt to urgently mention its special leave petition (SLP) challenging a Madras High Court order permitting the lighting of a lamp at the disputed 'Deepathoon' site on Thirupparankundram Hill, which houses the Arulmigu Subramanya Swamy Temple in Madurai. Tamil Nadu's plea for urgent listing was firmly opposed by counsel representing the worshippers.

The SLP was filed by Madurai District Collector KJ Praveenkumar, who faces contempt proceedings for allegedly defying a 1 December order of Justice GR Swaminathan allowing a plea to light the Karthigai Deepam lamp at the 'Deepathoon' on 3 December. Despite the order, district authorities refused permission, prompting the judge to take up a contempt petition against Praveenkumar, Madurai City Police Commissioner J Lokanathan and Temple Executive Officer Yagna Narayanan. Justice Swaminathan also permitted petitioner Rama Ravikumar and 10 others to carry the articles uphill and directed CISF to provide protection, but the authorities imposed prohibitory orders instead and moved a division bench.

- Meanwhile, Chief Minister MK Stalin took a veiled swipe at the BJP and Hindutva groups, remarking that Madurai wanted "only development".

Meanwhile, Chief Minister MK Stalin took a veiled swipe at the BJP and Hindutva groups, remarking that Madurai wanted "only development". Separately, the Madurai Bench cautioned against remarks undermining the judiciary. Responding to submissions by advocate MR Venkatesh about personal attacks against Justice Swaminathan, the bench warned litigants "not to test the court". *—PTI*

Illegal custody: SC gives bail to man jailed under UAPA

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to Tonlong Konyak, who had been in custody for over two years without his trial commencing for allegedly possessing counterfeit currency notes, describing his detention as "illegal."

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta criticised the Assam Police for failing to file the charge sheet within the statutory period under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). Under the law, the maximum period for filing a charge sheet is 90 days, extendable to 180 days with court approval. The bench said indefinite custody cannot be justified, even under stringent UAPA provisions.

The court noted that Konyak, a Myanmar national, had been granted default bail in two other cases where charge sheets were delayed. Justice Mehta observed that failure to file the charge sheet constituted a case of default bail and that prolonged custody without legal justification is impermissible.

Konyak was arrested by Assam Police on 23 July, 2023 for allegedly possessing Rs 3.25 lakh in counterfeit Indian currency notes. The charge sheet was eventually filed only on 30 July, 2025. The Gauhati High Court had previously refused bail, citing his illegal entry into India. *—PTI*

FEELING CHILLED

Bengalureans woke up to another cool, misty morning on Friday, with light drizzle and fog settling over the City

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

EX-JUDGES PEN LETTER

CJI faces flak for Rohingya remarks

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Retired High Court judges and senior advocates have written an open letter to the Chief Justice of India, **Surya Kant**, voicing exception to the "unconscionable remarks" made from his Bench about Rohingyas, while hearing a petition about the custodial disappearance of a group of them in India.

During a 2 December hearing of the petition filed by activist Rita Manchanda, Chief Justice Kant was reported as orally questioning the refugee status of Rohingyas and whether intruders ought to be welcomed with a red carpet.

"When those who flee violence are dismissed with rhetoric that is hostile to their very dignity, it threatens the foundational values of our Constitution and undermines public faith in the courts as a refuge for the vulnerable. We therefore call upon you to reaffirm, in public statements, remarks in court and judicial verdicts, a commitment to constitutional morality based on human dignity and justice for all, regardless of origin," the open letter addressed to Chief Justice Kant said.

The letter recalled India's track record of hosting refugees, balancing national security interests.

"The government had issued special documentation to Tibetans and Sri Lankans, recognising their status as refugees, and allowing them to access basic socio-economic rights. The Citizenship Amendment Act, in fact, grants exemption from the Foreigners Act to religious minorities fleeing persecution, from Bangladesh, Pakistan or Afghanistan," it read. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: X @ORRCA

ORR fixed soon, Priyank assures firms

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

IT Minister Priyank Kharge met senior representatives of companies along the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and assured time-bound action to resolve mobility and infrastructure issues. At a meeting organised by Outer Ring Road Companies Association (ORRCA), industry leaders highlighted concerns like poor last-mile connectivity, damaged service roads, congestion at key junctions, garbage accumulation and telecom disruptions caused by construction. Priyank said ORR is one of India's most important business corridors and must receive matching infrastructure support. The government has earmarked Rs 450 crore for road upgrades from Silk Board to KR Puram. He said immediate high-impact fixes will be prioritised. GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao was present. *—PTI*

Project to revive Chikkaballapur river launched

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 5 DEC

Chikkaballapur Zilla Panchayat has announced a plan to revitalise the South Pinakini River, historically a vital water source for the district. Chief Executive Officer Naveen Bhat stated, "Decades ago, South Pinakini, along with North Pinakini and Palar rivers, were the backbone of people of the district." Due to over-exploitation of groundwater and reduced rainfall, the rivers have dried up, leaving farmers reliant on underground water. The initiative, titled "Revive South Pinakini," will involve collaboration with ITC and Vyakthi Vikasa, an NGO. Bhat noted, "The Zilla Panchayat aims to complete the revival programme within three years," with civil works funded under MNREGA. He also praised local farmers for innovating in agriculture, especially in exotic fruit farming, leading to successes in horticulture. *—Salar News*

'GI products boost exports, tourism, & rural economy'

MYSURU, 5 DEC

E Somasundaram, Director of the Directorate of Agribusiness Development Board at Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, emphasised the importance of promoting Geographical Indication (GI) products at national and international levels during the GI Mahotsav 3.0 on Friday. He stated that such initiatives boost exports, promote tourism, and empower rural economies. "GI is not just a tag; it involves heritage and a living identity," he explained. The event, held at the CSIR-Central Food and Technological Research Institute, featured 54 stalls showcasing products like Gulbarga Tur Dal and Mysuru Betel Leaf. "India has 605 GI products, of which 324 are food items," Dr Somasundaram noted, highlighting the need for greater awareness and registration of these valuable products. *—Salar News*

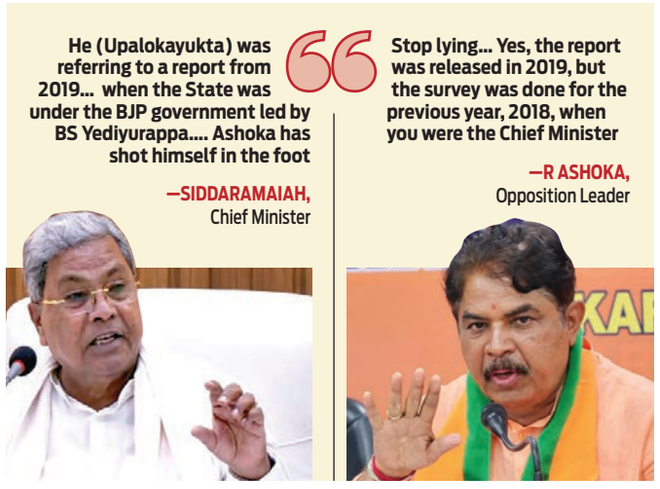
City cops to hold vintage car rally on 7 December

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

The Bengaluru City Police, along with the Vintage Car Owners' Association, will hold a Vintage Car and Bike Rally on 7 December, 2025 to raise awareness about rising drug abuse among the youth. Over 75 vintage vehicles will join the event, which will be flagged off at 9.00am by Home Minister Dr G Parmeshwara at Vidhana Soudha. The rally will pass through key city roads before ending at the Big Banyan Resort in Ramanagara. Awareness programmes will also be held at MG Road Metro Station, St Joseph's College and RV Engineering College. *—ANI*

CM flays BJP & calls 63% graft charge fake news

Upalokayukta says the report he spoke on was from 2019


He (Upalokayukta) was referring to a report from 2019... when the State was under the BJP government led by BS Yediyurappa.... Ashoka has shot himself in the foot
—SIDDARAMAIAH, Chief Minister
Stop lying... Yes, the report was released in 2019, but the survey was done for the previous year, 2018, when you were the Chief Minister
—R ASHOKA, Opposition Leader

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah accused the BJP of circulating a "fake narrative" by twisting Upalokayukta B Veerappa's words on "63 per cent corruption" in the State. The CM pointed out that Veerappa was referring to a 2019 report when the saffron party was in power.

Veerappa, speaking to a news channel, clarified that, during a recent book launch event, he was referring to a 2019 report, while speaking about corruption in various states, including Karnataka -- 63 per cent.

His statement was picked by a section of the media without giving context, and the same was misused by politicians, he said.

However, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka, reiterated that Veerappa has spoken about 63 per cent corruption under the Congress government, and that he has not mentioned the previous BJP government anywhere, or has made any reference to 2019.

Siddaramaiah wrote on X, "The BJP is circulating a fake narrative by twisting Upalokayukta B Veerappa's words. He was referring to a report of Transparency International India from 2019, which said corruption in Karnataka stood at 63 per cent when the BJP government under BS Yediyurappa was in power. But BJP leaders, in their hurry to attack us, have only exposed their own record".

Siddaramaiah added that from the "40 per cent commission regime" to Covid procurement scams, PSI recruitment scam, irrigation project illegalities, and cases where even their own workers levelled charges - BJP's corruption track record needs no introduction.

"Our government is cleaning up the mess we inherited," he added.

Similarly, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar said the 40 per cent commission BJP was actually now a 63 per cent corruption government.

However, Ashoka refused to back down.

"Siddaramaiah should watch the video of (the) speech before commenting on this. Siddaramaiah should not imagine everything. I have not created this," he said, noting the Valmiki Corporation scam, MUDA scam and 60 per cent corruption allegations made by the contractors association. On X, Ashoka noted that the report was passed in 2019, meaning it covered the 2018 period – when Siddaramaiah was Chief Minister. *—Agencies*

With saffron shawls, Haveri students protest against hijab

HAVERI, 5 DEC

A fresh controversy has erupted at the CG Bellad Government First Grade College in Akki Alur village of Haveri district, after groups of students wore Hijabs and saffron shawls to class on Thursday, prompting renewed tensions on campus.

A group of Hindu students entered classrooms wearing saffron shawls, claiming it was a protest against the administration's alleged inaction over the dress code. Students alleged that despite repeatedly flagging the matter, the college had not taken any steps to enforce uniform rules equally.

Principal Viresh Kammoor clarified that the institution requires all students to wear the prescribed uniform inside classrooms, although some concessions are made in individual cases.

- Students wore saffron shawls in protest against their classmates wearing Hijabs in Akki Alur village. The previous BJP government had imposed a hijab ban on students

He stated that the college will hold a meeting with staff and parents to address the issue and arrive at a resolution.

"Before entering the classroom, they wear different clothes. But there is a rule that all students must wear college uniforms inside the classroom. If there is a problem with an individual student, they are given a concession. The students had brought it to my attention about coming to class wearing hijab," he said. "But today, after a female student came to class wearing a hijab, the boys came wearing saffron shawls. A meeting of the college staff and parents of the students will be called to resolve this problem."

The previous BJP government in the State had imposed a Hijab ban on students in educational institutions. The matter reached the Karnataka High Court, which also upheld the ban imposed by the then-BJP government. The Supreme Court delivered a split verdict, leading to the Karnataka High Court verdict being upheld. *—ANI*

Govt inks Rs, 1,000 crore deal with Taiwan company

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

The State government on Friday signed an MoU with the Allegiance International Co Ltd of Taiwan to establish an Indo-Taiwan Industrial Technology Innovation Park (ITIP) in the State, with an investment of around Rs 1,000 crore.

The MoU was signed by Rahul Sharanappa Sankanur, the Director, Department of Electronics, IT, BT and Lawrence Chen, VP, Allegiance Group in the presence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Minister for Electronics, IT & BT, Priyank Kharge, and senior officials.

The project will be executed by the Allegiance Group, creating around 800 direct jobs over five years, Kharge's office said.

The ITIP will serve as a hub for Taiwanese companies in electronics and semiconductors, fostering advanced manufacturing, R&D, and innovation.

The MoU's highlights are establishment of a world-class industrial park to house Taiwanese firms in electronics and semiconductor sectors; development of a robust supply chain ecosystem for components, PCBs, and chip design; creation of high-value jobs and skill development programmes in collaboration with academic institutions; and promotion of technology transfer and global best practices. *—PTI*

Stop lying whimsically: DKS hits back at Chalavadi on watch row

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

Claiming that he had transparently stated everything about the luxury watches he owns, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar hit back at BJP MLC Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, telling him to stop lying "as whimsically as (his) tongue desires".

A controversy broke out after Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah were spotted wearing luxury watches during their breakfast meet at the former's residence. The BJP and JD(S) alleged that the same Cartier watch the two wore cost Rs 43 lakh each.

When asked about it later, Shivakumar said that he had declared all the watches he owns in his election affidavit. However, Narayanaswamy, the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, held a press conference on Thursday and claimed that Shivakumar had not declared it.

BJP MLC Chalavadi Narayanaswamy shows DyCM DK Shivakumar's election affidavit; Shivakumar's watch **PHOTOS: X**

Holding up Shivakumar's election affidavit, Narayanaswamy said "in your 2018 and 2023 election affidavits, there is no mention of this 'Cartier' watch anywhere!"

However, the Bengaluru Minister attempted to dismiss Narayanaswamy's claims.

Attaching an image of an affidavit submitted to the Lokayukta on 28 October, 2025, Shivakumar said "please take a look at this".

The documents of assets declared on 28 October, mention a Rolex watch worth Rs 9 lakh and two Cartier watches worth Rs 23,90,246 and Rs 12,06,000 respectively.

Siddaramaiah was earlier embroiled in a massive controversy over a Hublot watch. *—Salar News*

MOBILE SANITATION

Home Minister G Parameshwara, DG & IGP MA Saleem (right), City Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh (left) and others flag off Hygiene on Go, a mobile sanitation vehicle at the DG office, in Bengaluru, on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

IN RAJYA SABHA, BJP MP SEEKS CUT IN SUGAR RECOVERY RATE & HIKE IN MSP

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Karnataka BJP leader Iranna B Kadadi urged the Centre to reduce the recovery rate of sugar from 10.25 per cent to 9.5 per cent and raise its minimum support price to help cane growers and millers.

The sugar recovery rate is the percentage of sugar extracted from sugarcane.

Raising the issue in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, Kadadi said the recovery rate in the State has been 9.5 per cent, even though the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane is fixed at a higher recovery rate of 10.25 per cent.

Meanwhile, Bidar MP Sagar Khandre urged the Centre to immediately revise the existing relief norms related to crop damage and to announce a special relief package for farmers, noting the damages rains caused in Karnataka. *—Salar News with agencies*

Man dies by suicide at City's Purple Line Metro

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

A 38-year-old man tragically died by suicide after jumping in front of an approaching metro train at Kengeri station in the City on Friday morning, disrupting services briefly on a section of the line. The deceased has been identified as Shantagoud Policepatil.

The incident occurred at approximately 8.15am, with eyewitnesses reporting that the man timed his leap perfectly, resulting in a tragic collision with the train. Emergency services responded swiftly, but he succumbed to his injuries on the spot.

The police and paramedics quickly cleared the body from the tracks. As a result of the incident, operations on the Purple Line were temporarily halted between Mysore Road and Challaghatta; however, services were restored by 9.40am. The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) confirmed, "Services between Jnana Bharathi and Challagatta have been fully restored. Train operations across the entire Purple Line are now running as per schedule."

The Kengeri police are currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

Surya slams Hebbal-Mekhri Circle tunnel

NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU, 5 DEC

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya lashed out at the Congress government a day after the State Cabinet approved a short twin-tunnel road and an elevated corridor between the Hebbal flyover and Mekhri Circle for Rs 2,215.

The government is "obsessed with making tunnels," Surya wrote on X on Friday. He said the State's Finance Department had "specifically suggested that a surface road could be built at one tenth of the expenditure".

He claimed that the department that identified several issues in the project, including conflicts in integration and utility conflict between the north to south tunnel and the short tunnel, ambiguity in the funding mechanism, and a lack of supporting evidence from experts.

- Tejasvi Surya said that the Cabinet cleared the project despite apprehensions from the Finance Department

"Yet, the Siddaramaiah government is pushing ahead with this project," he said. "The arbitrary decision making of the Congress is turning governance into an unpredictable process that lacks transparency and accountability."

"Under the Congress government, urban planning and development has become a budget maximisation affair," he remarked.

The Cabinet had approved the construction of a 2.27km tunnel road on Thursday.

Notably, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will acquire land from the Gandhi Krishi Vigyan Kendra (GKVK) campus for the project. *—Salar News*

AMID INDIGO CHAOS

Couple attend their own reception online

HUBBALLI, 5 DEC

The venue was all decked up, and a delicious spread was ready for the invitees. But Megha Ksheerasagar and Sangam Das could not attend their wedding reception, thanks to flight disruptions.

The reception was arranged here on 3 December, but the couple was forced to attend their grand event via video conference due to the disruptions in Indigo's operations.

Not wanting to miss the day, the couple appeared on a large screen at the venue through video conferencing from Bhubaneswar, greeted the guests and apologised for not being present.

Instead, the bride's parents graced the occasion at the reception venue, -Gujarat Bhavan, here, on behalf of the couple that had married on 23 November in Bhubaneswar.

Newlyweds Sangam Das and Megha Ksheerasagar **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

The family said the couple, both software engineers, work in Bengaluru. The reception was arranged at the bride's home town Hubballi on Wednesday.

The couple had booked tickets on the Bhubaneswar-Bengaluru-Hubballi route for 2 December. Some of their relatives had booked tickets on the Bhubaneswar-Mumbai-Hubballi route too. However, IndiGo flights were delayed from 9am on 2 December until 3 December early morning, and were cancelled.

"Now, what can we do after that? I arranged a screen and asked my daughter and son-in-law to join the reception online," the bride's father, Anil Kumar Ksheerasagar, said.

Relatives had come from Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Bagalkote, Davangere and Belagavi. *—PTI*

SC bins Shraddananda's plea in Shakereh murder case

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Supreme Court has refused to entertain a plea filed by Swamy Shraddananda, who is undergoing imprisonment for killing his wife, seeking a review of the verdict which directed that he should remain in prison for life.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi asked the petitioner on Friday to approach the Karnataka government.

Advocate Varun Thakur, appearing for the petitioner, then withdrew the plea, and the matter was dismissed.

- Shraddananda, 84, whose wife Shakereh was the granddaughter of Sir Mirza Ismail, a former dewan of the princely state of Mysore, sought a review of the July 2008 verdict

Shraddananda, 84, alias Murali Manohar Mishra, whose wife Shakereh was the granddaughter of Sir Mirza Ismail, a former dewan of the princely state of Mysore, had sought a review of the July 2008 verdict of a three-judge SC bench.

The apex court had last year refused a plea by Shraddananda seeking a review of the verdict, which directed he should remain in prison for the rest of his life.

He had sought relief, arguing that nothing adverse had been reported against him during his stay in jail. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

ED seeks case records in Sabarimala case

KOLLAM, 5 DEC

Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a petition before the Vigilance Court seeking copies of FIRs and other case records related to the alleged loss of gold from the Sabarimala temple, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). ED, in its petition, stated it is initially satisfied that Unnikrishnan Potty and others possess "proceeds of crime" and more evidence is needed to confirm money laundering. ED had approached the Kerala High Court but was directed to move to Vigilance Court instead. However, the public prosecutor objected to the request as a confidential investigation is already underway and handing over the documents at this stage would not be appropriate. The court directed the matter for further hearing on 10 December. *—PTI*

Manipur govt warns groups over threats to Sangai

IMPHAL, 5 DEC

The Manipur government has issued a strong warning against any individual or organisation attempting to disturb peace or intimidate law-abiding citizens, following threats made by a coalition of proscribed groups against those who took part in the recently concluded Sangai Festival. The G-5 comprising the UNLF, KCP, KYKL, Prepak and Prepak (Pro) had demanded that all participants issue a public apology before 10 December, calling their involvement a "betrayal" of internally displaced persons. Manipur Police have arrested three G-5 cadres from Imphal West and Imphal East for issuing threats, with several cases registered. The state reaffirmed that no group has authority to impose decrees and urged the public to report any intimidatio. *—PTI*

Haryana Police raids 707 hotspots, arrests 165 people

CHANDIGARH, 5 DEC

Haryana Police raided 707 crime hotspots, arresting 165 people in just one day. A total of 92 new criminal cases were registered under 'Operation Hotspot Domination', going against known state offenders, drug and illicit liquor networks and illegal weapons. Across districts, police seized 4.33 kg cannabis, 218 g opium, over 85 g heroin, 23.5 g smack, 890 intoxicating tablets and 1,000 bottles of illegal liquor. Police were not limited to arresting criminals but also targeted property earned through crime, sending a message that properties that are proceeds of crime will not remain safe. As part of the Operation, the cybercrime team handled 309 cybercrime complaints involving attempted fraud of Rs 88,36,208. *—PTI*

Nitish gets World Records for 10th oath as CM

PATNA, 5 DEC

The World Book of Records, London, on Friday recognised Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's "milestone" of having taken oath as chief minister for the 10th time. Announcing the development, Janata Dal (United) national working president Sanjay Jha posted on X, "It is a matter of great joy and pride to share that the World Book of Records, London, has recognised the extraordinary milestone achieved by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar, who has taken oath as Chief Minister for the 10th time." He described it as a "truly rare distinction" in the country's democratic journey. JD(U) chief Kumar first became chief minister in 2000, though he had to step down within seven days after failing to prove a majority in the floor test. *—PTI*

India–Russia trade to cross $100B by 2030

India announces free 30-Day e-tourist visa for Russian citizens; Nations eye energy deal

>>>Continued from Page 1

Modi and Putin expressed confidence that the bilateral trade target of USD 100 billion, originally set for 2030, would be achieved ahead of schedule, with current trade already around USD 70 billion.

Russia remains one of India's largest suppliers of crude oil, fertilisers and defence equipment, though New Delhi is seeking to increase its exports to address a widening trade gap. India imports about USD 65 billion worth of Russian goods annually, while exporting just under $5 billion.

Putin said early signing of an India–EAEU preferential trade agreement would cut barriers and enhance the flow of goods, services and capital. In a move to boost people-to-people ties, India announced free 30-day e-tourist visas and 30-day group tourist visas for Russian citizens.

Modi highlighted expanding cooperation in maritime training, including preparing Indian seafarers for operations in polar waters, creating new employment opportunities.

ENERGY, NUCLEAR & INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

The Russian president said Moscow will provide more market access for Indian products and that both sides are keen on cooperation for construction of small and modular nuclear reactors and floating nuclear power plants.

Putin said Russia could also extend help to India in non-energy application of nuclear technologies, for example in medicine and agriculture.

In his comments, Modi said energy security has been a strong and important pillar of the India-Russia partnership and that the cooperation in the field of civil nuclear energy has been crucial.

SECURITY & TERRORISM

Modi and Putin reaffirmed long-standing security cooperation, including counter-terrorism. Modi drew parallels between recent attacks in Pahalgam and Moscow's Crocus City Hall, saying the "root of all these incidents is the same"

CEREMONIAL WELCOME, DEFENCE FOCUS

Putin was accorded a ceremonial welcome and tri-services guard of honour at Rashtrapati Bhavan in the morning, followed by a visit to Raj Ghat to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi

Defence cooperation remained a key pillar of the talks. India and Russia are expected to sign agreements on logistical support, defence collaboration and mechanisms to facilitate the movement of Indian workers to Russia. *—PTI*

President Droupadi Murmu with Russian President Vladimir Putin during the latter's ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi; Gifts given by Modi to Putin: Russian edition of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, a handcrafted silver horse from Maharashtra, an ornate Murshidabad silver tea set, a handcrafted marble chess set from Agra, Assam black tea and Kashmiri saffron *PHOTO: PTI*

PTI, TASS to exchange India, Russia news

The Press Trust of India and Russian news agency TASS on Friday signed a cooperation agreement for regular exchange of news content on developments in India and Russia. The agreement was inked by Vijay Joshi, PTI's CEO and Editor-in-Chief, and TASS Director General Andrey Kondrashov on the sidelines of the India-Russia Business Forum here coinciding with the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to India. Speaking at the event held at Bharat Mandapam, Kondrashov said the agreement signing was another important step towards strengthening friendship and mutual understanding between Russia and India. *—PTI*

Rahul not called to Putin dinner, Tharoor gets invite

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Congress on Friday said Leaders of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi have not been invited to the banquet for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and took a swipe at its own MP Shashi Tharoor for accepting the invite.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "There has been speculation whether the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha have been invited for tonight's official dinner in honour of President Putin. The two LoPs have not been invited."

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera accused the government of breaking protocols daily and not believing in democratic principles.

Earlier, Tharoor said there was a time when the chairman of the external affairs committee was routinely invited but that practice seems to have stopped from some years.

Gandhi on Thursday had alleged that the government tells visiting foreign dignitaries not to meet the Leader of the Opposition due to its "insecurity".

His remarks had come hours ahead of Putin's two-day visit to India. *—PTI*

Russia's Rosatom delivers nuclear fuel to Kudankulam plant

Russia's state-run nuclear corporation has said it has delivered the first consignment of nuclear fuel for initial loading of the third reactor at the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu. The delivery of the nuclear fuel coincided with Russian President Vladimir Putin's arrival in New Delhi. A cargo flight operated by the Nuclear Fuel Division of Rosatom delivered fuel assemblies manufactured by the Novosibirsk Chemical Concentrates Plant, it said. *—PTI*

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, Friday *PHOTO: ANI*

Lok Sabha passes Cess Bill on pan masala

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Lok Sabha witnessed heated exchanges on Friday as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the passage of the Health and National Security Cess Bill, imposing a cess on pan masala manufacturing units.

Sitharaman assured states that revenue generated would be shared for public health initiatives.

"The constitutional power of levying a cess rests in Article 270," she stated, explaining that it aims to support national security and health expenditures.

The bill was passed via voice vote, with Sitharaman noting that the Central government had transferred more in cess revenues to states than it had collected since 2014.

"The purpose is to create a dedicated resource stream for health and national security," she added.

In a separate development, tensions escalated in the Lok Sabha as Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Shatabdi Roy voiced concerns over the deportation of Bangla speakers, claiming they were being sent to Bangladesh. Her remarks prompted a fierce response from BJP MPs, with Sambit Patra refuting her claims as "false and untrue," and emphasising that Odisha does not shelter illegal migrants.

As debates intensified, Roy provocatively suggested that if Bangla speakers could be deported, MPs speaking Hindi or Urdu should also be sent to Pakistan. The chaotic scene underscored the growing political tensions surrounding identity and immigration issues in India. *—PTI*

Criminalise marital rape: Tharoor

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has introduced a Lok Sabha bill to criminalise marital rape. The statement of objects of the member-only bill is an urgent necessity in India's legal framework. Currently, Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, excludes marital rape from being a punishable offence. Tharoor maintains that this outdated legal exception is rooted in patriarchal colonial notions that view wives as property. This failure to criminalise marital rape has left married women legally defenceless. *—PTI*

'Ban 10-min delivery services'

Raghav Chadha, an Aam Aadmi Party leader, has demanded an immediate ban on 10-minute delivery services, labelling the practice as "cruelty" towards gig workers who face enormous pressure. In the Rajya Sabha, he emphasised that delivery personnel are not mere machines but valued individuals. *—PTI*

Bin 'Lord' from British names?

BJP leader Sujeeth Kumar has advocated for the exclusion of the title "Lord" used for British Viceroys and Governors-General from educational and official materials, calling it a remnant of colonialism. In the Rajya Sabha, he illustrated that numerous NCERT textbooks continue to reference figures like Lord Curzon and Lord Mountbatten. *—PTI*

Right to Disconnect Bill 2025

A private member's bill, which seeks to allow employees not to entertain work-related calls and emails outside work hours, was introduced in Lok Sabha. NCP MP Supriya Sule introduced the "Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025". *—PTI*

Calcutta HC declines plea to halt Babri mosque construction

KOLKATA, 5 DEC

- A division bench led by Acting Chief Justice Sujoy Paul considered a PIL seeking to halt the ceremony on the grounds it could disturb communal harmony.

The Calcutta High Court today declined to intervene in the construction of a mosque in Beldanga, Murshidabad, modelled after Ayodhya's Babri Masjid. This decision comes just ahead of a scheduled foundation-laying ceremony on 6 December, the anniversary of the original mosque's demolition.

A division bench led by Acting Chief Justice Sujoy Paul considered a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking to halt the ceremony on the grounds it could disturb communal harmony. The court determined that maintaining law and order would be the West Bengal government's responsibility, following assurances of adequate police deployment in the area.

The Centre indicated that 19 companies of the Central Armed Police Force were on standby following communal riots in the region earlier this year. The PIL, filed a day prior, highlighted the risk of unrest due to remarks made by suspended Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLA Humayun Kabir, who has reportedly made inflammatory comments.

Sabyasachi Mukherjee, representing the petitioner, stated, "We never wanted to stop anyone from practising their faith," while emphasising the necessity for peace. Kabir, who has vowed to prevent any violence during the ceremony, called the court's decision "a victory for the Constitution." He added, "We will have 2000 volunteers to ensure no untoward incidents occur."

The TMC's state vice-president, Jay Prakash Majumdar, noted that the court recognised the state's authority to address potential law and order issues. Kabir, recently suspended for "communal politics," also announced plans to resign from the TMC and launch his own party. *—PTI*

DESPITE LISTING QUESTIONS

MP MLAs skip Assembly, Minister cites wedding season

BHOPAL, 5 DEC

- Legislative Affairs Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya also suggested in the House that the assembly calendar be drawn up keeping the wedding season in mind in future.

Over a dozen MLAs from the treasury and Opposition benches skipped the Question Hour of the Madhya Pradesh assembly on Friday despite their queries being listed for replies, with a minister attributing their absence to the ongoing weddings that people expect them to mark their attendance at.

Legislative Affairs Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya also suggested in the House that the assembly calendar be drawn up keeping the wedding season in mind in future.

It was perhaps for the time in the recent times that so many members remained absent during the Question Hour despite having their questions listed for replies.

After calling member Nitendra Brajendra Singh Rathore's name, whose question was listed as 25th and last, Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar called the names of at least a dozen more members, but none of them responded.

The MLAs who were absent included Kamleshwar Dodiyar, Kunwar Singh Tekam, Rajendra Bharti, Narendra Singh Kushwaha, Dhirendra Bahadur Singh, Arvind Pateria, Satish Malviya, Rajesh Kumar Shukla, Madhu Bhagat, Bharosingh, Mukesh Malhotra, Virendra Singh Lodhi, Atif Aqeel and Bhupendra Singh.

After the speaker called the names once again, minister Vijayvargiya said the wedding season was at its peak and it was difficult for a public representative to skip these events in their respective constituencies. *—PTI*

Lamp row: TN BJP Chief, 112 others booked

MADURAI, 5 DEC

Tensions have escalated over the lighting of a traditional lamp at the Arulmighu Subramaniya Swamy Temple on Thiruparankundram hill.

On 4 December, police detained 113 individuals, including Tamil Nadu BJP President Nainar Nagenthran and senior leader H Raja, during a protest advocating for the lamp's illumination. The group faced charges of disturbing public peace alongside other offences.

Following a Madras High Court order that permitted the lighting of the lamp and revoked prohibitory orders in the area, the BJP leaders attempted to access the hill. However, when police intervened to prevent their ascent, they were taken into custody. "The Tamil Nadu Police arrested devotees who were proceeding to the temple to light the 'Karthigai Deepam'," asserted Union Minister L Murugan, defending the activists' right to worship.

As the situation unfolded, the matter reached the Supreme Court, which agreed to consider the Tamil Nadu government's plea against the high court's order.

During discussions in the Lok Sabha, DMK leader TR Baalu accused the BJP of inciting communal tension, questioning, "Who should light the deepam on the hill? Should it be the Hindu Religious Endowment Board representative, or some miscreants who have got a judgement from a Madras High Court judge?"

In response, Murugan claimed the state government was denying devotees their rights and indicated that the judiciary should not be discredited. *—PTI*

17 lakh deceased voters found in Gujarat voter rolls

AHMEDABAD, 5 DEC

The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls across several states has uncovered major discrepancies and raised fresh concerns about the pressure faced by booth-level officers (BLOs). In Gujarat, the Chief Electoral Officer reported that more than 17 lakh deceased voters were still listed on the rolls, alongside over 6.14 lakh absent voters and around 30 lakh individuals who have permanently migrated.

In West Bengal, Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal has directed BLOs to thoroughly re-check enumeration forms and ensure that every deceased, absent or duplicate voter is removed before the first phase ends on 11 December. Warning of legal action for intentional errors, he reminded BLOs of their responsibility to ensure an accurate electoral roll.

Such concerns have already surfaced in Uttar Pradesh, where multiple BLO deaths have been reported. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Dubai-Hyderabad Emirates flight gets bomb threat

HYDERABAD, 5 DEC

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad received a bomb threat on Friday targeting Emirates flight EK526 from Dubai, prompting authorities to activate standard safety protocols. The threat email was sent to the airport's customer support address at 7.30am, and the Boeing 777-300ER landed safely at 8.30am. The aircraft was immediately isolated, and passengers and baggage were screened, with sniffer dogs deployed and fire engines placed on standby. The incident came a day after the airport received two similar threat emails aimed at IndiGo's Madina-Hyderabad and Sharjah-Hyderabad flights, one of which was diverted to Ahmedabad as a precaution. *—PTI*

Rajasthan High Court evacuated after bomb threat

JAIPUR, 5 DEC

The Rajasthan High Court was evacuated on Friday after officials received an email warning of a bomb on the premises. All judicial proceedings were suspended immediately as bomb disposal experts and a dog squad conducted an extensive search of the entire complex. Additional DCP (South) Lalit Sharma said police were alerted without delay, and several teams were deployed to carry out parallel checks. No suspicious item has been recovered so far. After a thorough inspection, entry to the court was reinstated, and proceedings are scheduled to resume from 2pm. The incident comes a day after similar bomb threats were issued to the Ajmer Dargah and the district collectorate, and a month after the court received a previous threat.*—PTI*

Choked by smog, Delhi now shivers under cold wave

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

There was no respite from the city's toxic air on Friday, as air quality remained in the 'very poor' category. The 9am AQI reading stood at 323, with 30 stations reporting similar levels; Bawana recorded the highest at 373.The city's AQI, 279 on Sunday, deteriorated to 304 on Monday and rose sharply to 372 on Tuesday, nearing the 'severe' category. It remained high at 342 on Wednesday and again registered 'very poor' levels at 304 on Thursday. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) classifies AQI levels of 0–50 as 'good', 51–100 'satisfactory', 101–200 'moderate', 201–300 'poor', 301–400 'very poor' and 401–500 'severe'. Meanwhile, India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a cold wave. *—PTI*

Mathura's Akbarpur village name board defaced

MATHURA, 5 DEC

Unidentified individuals have defaced a village name board on the Delhi–Agra national highway in Mathura district, painting over the name Akbarpur and replacing it with Raghuwarpur, police said on Friday. The incident came to light after a video went viral, prompting police to launch an inquiry. Officials believe the act may be linked to a remark made last month by Bageshwar Dham head priest Dhirendra Krishna Shastri during a padyatra, where he suggested the village "should be renamed to Raghuwarpur". Police clarified that his comment was aimed at the government, not the public. Circle Officer Bhushan Verma said the board was smeared with black paint and altered. He added that it will be restored and legal action will follow against the offenders. *—PTI*

Stranded passengers crowd the IndiGo counters at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport after multiple flight cancellations on Friday. In Kolkata, a distraught traveller breaks down outside Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport amid the disruption **PHOTO: PTI**

IndiGo chaos leaves flyers frustrated

They fume over cancellations, lack of clarity

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

A wave of flight disruptions across multiple cities left IndiGo passengers stranded, angry and without clear communication on Thursday and Friday, as hundreds of cancellations triggered chaos from Gorakhpur to Hyderabad, Raipur, Srinagar and Jammu.

In Gorakhpur, Muneeb Chaurasiya reached the airport for his 4 pm flight to Mumbai on Thursday only to be told it was delayed. At 9 pm, IndiGo informed him it had been cancelled and rescheduled for Friday — but that, too, was cancelled. "Reaching the airport costs Rs 2,000 one way. I spent Rs 8,000 on travel and my ticket was Rs 10,000," he said. With fares on other airlines touching Rs 53,000, he opted for a rail journey and sought a full refund.

At Mumbai airport, passengers shouted at IndiGo staff after repeated cancellations. Abhilasha Singh, travelling to Patna, said she received a message at 6.30 am that her flight was on time, only to be told it was cancelled on arrival. Many whose flights had been rebooked earlier found their replacements cancelled too.

In Hyderabad, chaos at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport entered a second day as IndiGo cancelled 37 outbound flights and a similar number of inbound services. Passengers marched inside the terminal and confronted ground staff. Videos showed slogans of "Indigo bandh karo" and "Indigo murdabad". Some travellers said they had waited over 12 hours with repeated assurances of "just two more hours". IndiGo said Friday would see the highest number of cancellations as the airline attempts to "reboot operations" through short-term proactive cancellations.

At Raipur airport, passengers fumed over abrupt cancellations and lack of communication. Many said their morning flights had been pushed to late night with no certainty of operation. Arun Kumar Patra, travelling from Odisha to Delhi to catch an international connection, said both his original and rescheduled IndiGo flights were cancelled, leaving him stranded. Another passenger described waiting 12 hours in Jharsuguda before being told to travel to Raipur — only to face another cancellation.

Similar scenes unfolded in Bilaspur, where passengers shouted slogans against the airline.

In Srinagar, a couple from Kerala said their flight, shown as "on time" in the morning, was marked cancelled on arrival, forcing them to miss a family event. At Jammu airport, where IndiGo cancelled 11 flights, long queues formed at inquiry counters. Passengers said they received no clarity on flight status. Swati, travelling to Lucknow, said she had been stranded for hours. Another traveller, Arti Razdan, trying to reach Bengaluru, said her flights had been cancelled on 2, 3 and 5 December, leaving her stuck for a week with two children and no viable plan. *—PTI*

> "IndiGo fiasco is the cost of this Govt's monopoly model. Once again, it's ordinary Indians who pay the price - in delays, cancellations and helplessness. India deserves fair competition in every sector, not match-fixing monopolies
> -Rahul Gandhi, Cong leader

COURTROOM FILES

SC to appoint VCs if Kerala CM & Guv don't resolve tiff

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Supreme Court said it will intervene to resolve the deadlock over the selection of vice chancellors for two technical universities in Kerala if Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the Governor-cum-Chancellor, Rajendra Arlekar, do not reach a consensus.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and PB Varale was hearing the matter regarding the appointments of VCs of the APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University, and the University of Digital Sciences Innovation and Technology on Friday.

The bench asked Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the governor, and senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, representing the chief minister, to find an amicable solution.

Venkataramani submitted that the Justice (Retd.) Sudhanshu Dhulia Committee had recommended two sets of names, and the chancellor had picked two names. "The chief minister has some objections to some names. There are some common names too," the AG said.

Advocate Gupta said that the name, which is not acceptable to the chief minister, is the only one that the governor-cum-chancellor agrees upon. "I think a resolution has to be found by this court," Gupta replied.

Justice Pardiwala informed the counsels that the Justice Dhulia-led committee had recommended four names each for the two universities, and the governor and chief minister should appoint the most meritorious candidates from both sets.

Noting that it will make the appointments itself if consensus is not reached by 9 December, the court said, "Reach consensus by Tuesday, or we will appoint the vice chancellors."

The court has posted the matter for hearing on Thursday. *– PTI*

Governor Rajendra Arlekar and CM Pinarayi Vijayan **PHOTO: ANI**

SC rejects PIL on regulating AI use in judiciary

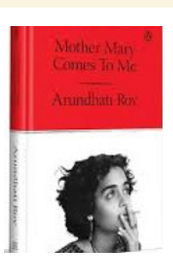
The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking to curb the "unregulated" use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in the judicial system.

The court said it was aware of the risks of using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools in the judiciary, and that it can be addressed by administrative decisions.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi heard senior advocate Anupam Lal Das, appearing for petitioner Kartikeya Rawal, who had sought safeguards against the risks posed by AI-generated content and its misuse in judicial processes. *– PTI*

SC bins plea for prohibiting sale of Arundhati's book

The Supreme Court dismissed a plea seeking to prohibit the sale of Arundhati Roy's book, 'Mother Mary Comes to Me,' as its cover depicted her smoking.



The bench dismissed the appeal filed by one Rajasimhan against the Kerala High Court order dismissing a PIL on the issue. "There is a warning in the book. Why do such a thing for publicity?" the CJI said. *– PTI*

Temple money belongs to deity not banks: SC

The Supreme Court has ruled that money belonging to a temple deity must not be used to support struggling cooperative banks. Chief Justice Surya Kant questioned, "You want to use the temple money to save the bank? What is wrong with directing that the temple money should go to a healthy nationalised bank which can give maximum interest?" The court's remarks came while rejecting appeals from several banks against a Kerala High Court order mandating them to refund deposits from the Thirunelly Temple Devaswom. The banks were urged to build credibility and attract customers. *– PTI*

Bombay HC rejects mosque's plea to use loudspeaker

NAGPUR, 5 DEC

The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court refused to grant relief to a mosque seeking permission to use loudspeakers, saying that it was not entitled to use the device as a matter of right.

The court, while relying on Supreme Court judgments, said that no religion mandates that prayers must be offered through voice amplifiers or by beating drums.

A bench of Justices Anil Pansare and Raj Wakode said that the issue of noise pollution was recurring and took suo motu cognisance of the same and asked the Maharashtra government to suggest an effective solution.

The court, in an order dated 1 December, dismissed a petition filed by Masjid Gousiya in Gondia district seeking permission to use loudspeakers for prayers.

The bench noted that the petitioner was unable to submit any material to show that the use of loudspeakers was mandatory to practice their religion.

"The petitioner, therefore, is not entitled to seek relief for the installation of a loudspeaker, as of right. The petition is accordingly dismissed," the court said.

Relying on SC judgments, the Bench said no religion says that prayers should be conducted by disturbing others' peace, or that they should be amplified through voice amplifiers or the beating of drums.

The Supreme Court also highlighted the importance of protecting citizens from excessive sound, particularly those who are very young or are aged or sick. *– PTI*

- The bench noted that the petitioner was unable to submit any material to show that the use of loudspeakers was mandatory to practice their religion.

Rape-accused Mamkootathil moves HC as SIT begins probe

THIRU'PURAM, 5 DEC

Expelled Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, facing two separate allegations of sexual assault, on Friday approached the Kerala High Court seeking interim protection from arrest.

A sessions court in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday rejected his plea for anticipatory bail in the first case, which involves accusations of rape and forced abortion filed last week. A second rape case was registered on Wednesday based on the complaint of another woman from Bengaluru.

Following the denial of bail, the Congress, which had earlier suspended Mamkootathil, moved to expel him from the party. The MLA, currently absconding since the first FIR, claims in his High Court plea that he is innocent and that custodial interrogation is unnecessary.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by Assistant Inspector General G. Poonguzhali, comprising officers of DSP rank and several sub-inspectors, has been formed to probe the second complaint. The complaint, emailed to the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee, contained only the sender's email ID and no contact details. Crime Branch officials have asked the complainant to come forward to record a statement, which they say is essential for the investigation. She alleges she was sexually assaulted under a false promise of marriage, though the date and location of the alleged incident remain unverified.

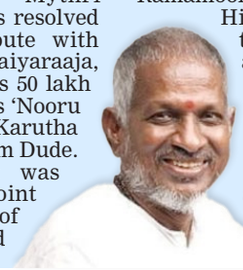
As police continue to search for Mamkootathil, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan accused the Congress of shielding leaders facing serious allegations, citing other party MLAs who remain within the organisation despite similar charges. *—PTI*

'DUDE' GETS ILAIYARAAJA SONG RIGHTS FOR ₹50L

CHENNAI, 5 DEC

Film producer Mythri Movie Makers has resolved a copyright dispute with music director Ilaiyaraaja, agreeing to pay Rs 50 lakh for using his songs 'Nooru Varusham' and 'Karutha Machan' in the film Dude.

The settlement was recorded in a joint memorandum of compromise dated 28 November, 2025 before Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy of the Madras High Court, effectively closing the application arising from Ilaiyaraaja's suit.



The suit had been filed over alleged copyright infringement. Following negotiations, the parties agreed on terms, which were reduced to writing in the memorandum. Both the plaintiff and defendant digitally signed the document, with their respective counsel also signing.

Upon reviewing the memorandum, the judge observed that there was no legal obstacle to granting the suit in line with the agreed settlement. *—PTI*

Delhi court extends NIA custody of Red Fort blast accused

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

A Delhi court on Friday extended the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) custody of Soyab, a resident of Faridabad, by 10 days. Soyab is accused of harbouring Umar-un Nabi, the alleged bomber behind the recent terror attack at the Red Fort. He was produced at the Patiala House Court before Principal and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna, who granted the extension following a request from the NIA for further custodial interrogation. Soyab is the seventh individual arrested in the case, which has been linked to a "white collar" terror module dismantled by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

In related developments, the Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) conducted early morning raids in Srinagar and Ganderbal as part of its ongoing investigations into the same terror module.

The raids targeted the residence of Tufail Bhat, previously arrested in connection with the incident. Officials stated that the "white collar" terror module comprises professionals, including doctors, who have reportedly been radicalised and allegedly played roles in the 10 November Delhi blast. *—PTI*

AGE OF CONSENT

Marriage age no bar for live-in: R'than HC

JAIPUR, 5 DEC

The Rajasthan High Court has ruled that two consenting adults can engage in a live-in relationship even if they have not yet reached the legal age for marriage, emphasising that constitutional rights should not be restricted on these grounds.

Justice Anoop Dhand delivered the judgement in response to a plea for protection from an 18-year-old woman and a 19-year-old man from Kota, who stated they were living together of their own accord. The couple informed the court that they had formalised a live-in agreement on 27 October 2025.

They alleged that the woman's family opposed the relationship and issued threats against their lives, claiming that their reports to the Kota police had gone unheeded. Public prosecutor Vivek Choudhary contested the petition, arguing that since the man had not yet reached the minimum legal age of 21 for marriage, he should be barred from a live-in arrangement.

However, the court dismissed this argument, stating, "The right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution cannot be denied merely because the petitioners are not of marriageable age." The judge also highlighted that live-in relationships are not criminalised under Indian law.

Justice Dhand instructed the superintendents of police in Bhilwara and Jodhpur (rural) to verify the claims in the petition, assess potential threats, and provide necessary protection to the couple. *—PTI*

After 75 days of stir, Tezpur varsity gets VC

TEZPUR, 5 DEC

Tezpur University in Assam's Sonitpur district, which shut down for seven days and has seen protest for 75 days, saw a dramatic development on Friday as senior-most faculty member Professor Dhruba Kumar Bhattacharyya assumed charge as acting vice chancellor (VC) suo-motu.

The unrest began after VC Shambhu Nath Singh, facing protests since mid-September over alleged corruption and administrative lapses, convened a Board of Management meeting on Thursday and appointed Mass Communication Professor Joya Chakraborty as pro-VC Chakraborty declined the role, prompting the Tezpur University United Forum (TUUF) to continue the indefinite shutdown, which began on 29 November.

Bhattacharyya, a professor of Computer Science and Engineering, informed the Union Ministry of Education's higher education secretary about assuming charge under relevant clauses of the Tezpur University Act, 1993. Faculty and students insist Singh be removed, citing absenteeism, fiscal irregularities, and administrative mismanagement. The shutdown has suspended all academic activities. *—PTI*

Putin's visit tests Delhi's balancing act with US

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi shake hands after delivering a joint press statement at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in India on Thursday for a two-day visit, underscoring a partnership between Moscow and New Delhi that has endured for nearly eight decades of geopolitical upheavals.

At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Kremlin chief attended the 23rd India-Russia annual summit in India's capital.

This is Putin's first visit to India since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The two countries have signaled they want to strengthen their "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" — an official designation for Russia-India ties adopted in 2010 — and "exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," India's Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

Ahead of the visit, Kremlin spokesperson and Putin's chief of staff Dmitry Peskov underlined the importance of defending the India-Russia bilateral relationship and trade.

His comments come as India is facing US tariffs over buying Russian oil.

Russia continues to navigate an ever-growing number of Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine.

"We have to secure our trade from pressure from abroad," Peskov told journalists.

Peskov highlighted that discussions are underway on alternative payment options to bypass sanctions.

Also on the agenda is the transfer of workers, as more and more Indians seek employment in Russia. Talking to reporters, he also referred to Russia's defense deals, including the sales of S-400 anti-aircraft defense systems, Sukhoi-57 fighter jets and small modular nuclear reactors.

India is by far the biggest buyer of Russian weapons internationally. Also, Russia is now supplying over 35 per cent of India's crude oil imports, compared to nearly 2per cent before the Ukraine war.

However, recent US measures targeting those doing business with Russian oil producers have pushed Indian refiners to diversify their suppliers, according to maritime intelligence firm Kpler.

US tariffs pushing India towards Russia

Even so, experts and diplomats contacted by DW say that ties between India and Russia have proven resilient to Western pressure, including the tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump.

"Putin's visit to India sends a clear message to the Western bloc that Russia does not remain isolated in global affairs," Rajan Kumar from the Centre of Russian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University told DW.

India also sees its ties to Russia as strategically important, helping New Delhi balance its relationships with both the West and China on a geopolitical level, according to Kumar.

"Trump's policies have created a trust deficit with the US and have increased the significance of Russia. Similarly, isolating Russia would imply pushing it closer to China, a situation India would not like to emerge," he added.

And while Russia maintains strong ties with China, Moscow, in turn, is wary of Beijing's growing geopolitical influence.

According to Kumar, this is the reason Russia is actively encouraging India's participation in Eurasian geopolitics through multilateral forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS.

Also, unlike Western nations, Russia does not lecture India on domestic issues or impose conditions on bilateral cooperation.

"Putin's visit bolsters this 'special and privileged' partnership rooted in converging interests, historical trust, and shared geopolitics," said Kumar.

Why are Russia and India so close?

Ties between Moscow and New Delhi were launched shortly after India gained independence in 1947.

The now-defunct Soviet Union had built up goodwill in India by supporting its industrial development and providing diplomatic backing in its dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir.

In 1971, Moscow openly supported India in its war with Pakistan, while both the US and China backed Islamabad. India also began procuring large quantities of Soviet-made weapons, and producing some of them — such as the T-72 tank — locally under Soviet licence.

Close defense ties survived the end of the Cold War, with Russia, starved for money in the 1990s, helping India produce largely Russian-designed missiles and fighter jets, and later driving the development of its nuclear-powered Arihant submarines.

In 2002, India and Russia signed an agreement on space exploration, which foresaw Russia helping India with space launches and satellite technology. Further agreements were signed after Modi first took office in 2014, including on nuclear energy and uranium sales.

With the war in Ukraine triggering upheaval in Europe in 2022, New Delhi was careful not to anger either Russia or the West — urging an end to the war without directly condemning Russia's invasion.

"As traditional partners, India and Russia have built a large capital of trust and confidence which is now coming in use as both countries face multiple geopolitical challenges, not just from the US but also China," D Bala Venkatesh Varma, a former ambassador to Russia, told DW, pointing out the relationship remains robust.

"The summit can be expected to see both leaders reinvesting in the bilateral strategic partnership," Varma added.

India and Moscow want 'strategic autonomy' in a shifting world

"The US may push India to reduce engagement with Moscow, but India values its defense and energy ties with Russia too much to compromise them," Harsh Pant, head of the strategic studies program at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a New Delhi think tank, told DW.

He described Washington's diplomatic stance as unpredictable, which in turn motivates India to carefully consider its partnerships.

"This balancing act allows India to sustain strong relations with Russia while managing its broader strategic partnership with the US," Pant added.

With Russia and India pursuing mutual interests and aiming for "strategic autonomy," the roots of their partnership "go beyond the immediate pressures from the Trump administration," according to the analyst.

Balancing Moscow and Washington

Putin's two-day visit will provide important clues about both India's and Russia's foreign policy priorities as power dynamics shift worldwide.

"The timing of Putin's visit to India underscores New Delhi's fundamental approach to foreign policy — strategic partnerships are not zero-sum games," Kanwal Sibal, a former Indian foreign secretary and ambassador to Russia, told DW.

"The US cannot dictate what India's foreign policy should be. We must accommodate and resist," he said.

Sibal's point is illustrated by India's carefully calibrated stance towards the Trump administration. India and the US are currently negotiating a trade deal focused on reducing tariffs and addressing Washington's trade deficit concerns with New Delhi. Moreover, New Delhi is advancing a landmark $1 billion (€860 million) deal between the US-based GE Aerospace and India's jet producer Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), hoping to procure US-made jet engines for India's indigenous Tejas fighter aircraft.

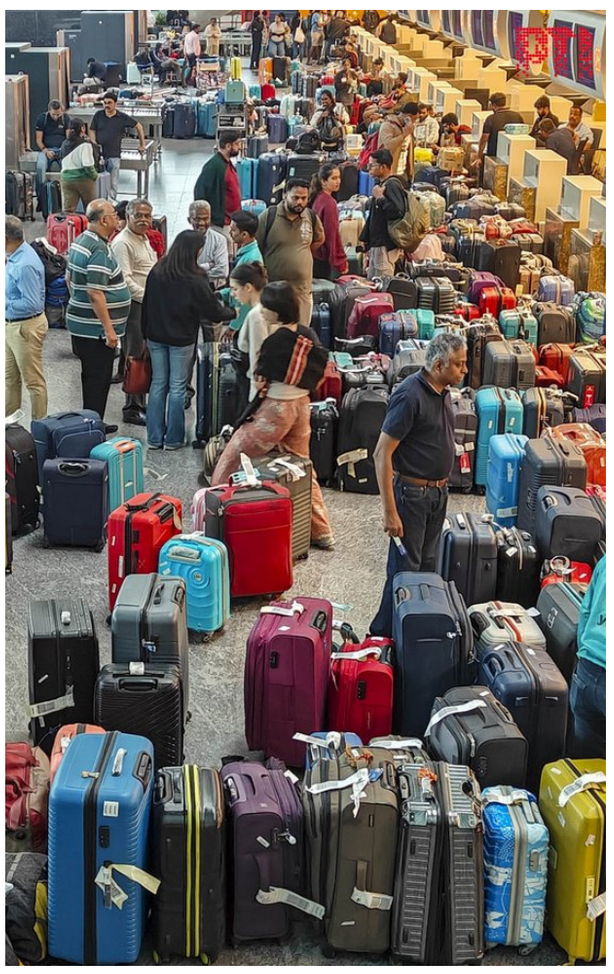
Yet, India is also willing to simultaneously roll out the red carpet for Russia's Vladimir Putin.

According to Sibal, defense cooperation with Washington continues, "but this is not taking anything away from the strategic importance of Russia."

"India accommodates American partnership where beneficial, while resisting pressure to abandon Moscow. Putin's visit demonstrates that India's foreign policy operates on its own terms, not Washington's preferences," he said. —DW NEWS

SALAR ساہر

Pilots flay DGCA's 'selective, unsafe' breather to IndiGo



Stranded passengers search for their luggage near a counter at the KIA in Bengaluru after IndiGo cancelled more than 400 flights at various airports on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Pilots' body Airlines' Pilots Association (ALPA) India on Friday took "strong" objection to safety regulator DGCA's "selective and unsafe" relief to domestic carrier IndiGo, amid widescale cancellations, saying the decision sets a dangerous precedent.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) earlier in the day granted IndiGo temporary exemption from stricter night duty rules for pilots. In a letter to the DGCA on Friday, ALPA-India said the decision not only sets a "dangerous precedent" but also undermines the very principle and purpose of the civil aviation requirement under which the norms have been formulated. It also said on the pretext of passenger inconvenience, IndiGo is seeking relief despite having knowingly increased their winter operations while being fully aware of the implementation of the second phase of the pilots' flight duty and rest period norms.

ALPA India had on Wednesday alleged that this (IndiGo cancelling huge number of flights) situation points to a "failure of proactive resource planning by dominant airlines, potentially exacerbated by an effort to pressurise the regulator to dilute the new FDTL norms for commercial gain".

And on Thursday, the DGCA in a statement said it has directed the airline to submit the flight duty time limitation (FDTL) relaxations required to normalise the flight operations, after the airline informed the regulator that "it was facing significant transitional challenges in roster planning and crew availability under phase-2 FDTL requirement".

IndiGo was the first carrier to oppose the new FDTL norms for pilots when they were introduced in January 2024 with March 2024 as the timeline for implementation.

The latest FDTL norms, which entail increased weekly rest periods to 48 hours, extended night hours, and limiting the number of night landings to only two, as against six earlier, were initially also opposed by domestic airlines, including IndiGo and Tata Group-owned Air India.

But they were subsequently rolled out by the DGCA following the Delhi High Court's directives, albeit with a delay of over one year, in a phased manner, and with certain variations for airlines like IndiGo and Air India.

While the first phase of these FDTL norms came into force in July, the second phase, which reduced the number of night landings from six to two earlier, was implemented from November 1.

"By granting selective exemptions to IndiGo, the DGCA has opened the door for all other operators to cite their own operational, commercial, or scheduling reasons to demand similar dispensations," ALPA India said in its Friday statement. "It also said that if dispensations can be granted based on each operator's requirements, then the relevance, authority, and intent of the FDTL CAR is defeated entirely."

Stating that the decision has been taken despite repeated representations, formal letters, and direct discussions with the DGCA office, ALPA India said, "During our meeting on 24 Novembe, it was unequivocally agreed that no dispensation, exemption, or variation, particularly those motivated by commercial interests would be granted to any operator."

"The consensus was clear: FDTL norms exist solely to safeguard human life, and any dilution of these limits would expose pilots, passengers, and aircraft to unacceptable risks. Yet, in complete contradiction to this understanding, your office has extended selective dispensation to IndiGo for Phase II implementation, allowing them to operate beyond the safety envelope prescribed by the CAR," it said.

Interestingly, at the time of implementation of these regulations, then Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had said "these changes -- that are very much in line with international best practices --" will ensure India has the necessary arsenal, as it prepares to clinch the largest domestic aviation market title in the future."

"What is even more alarming is that Phase II itself already includes many dispensations tailor made to the operators selectively, intended as a transitional relaxation to assist operators. Despite this built-in relief, your office has granted further selective dispensations exclusively to IndiGo, creating a situation where an operator already benefiting from relaxed provisions is given additional layers of relaxation on top of it, without any safety justification. Such a precedent is not only indefensible but also dangerous," the pilots body said. —*PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

4 slurs in 7 seconds: Trump brands Somalis 'garbage' as Cabinet cheers

President Donald Trump listens during a Cabinet meeting at the White House **PHOTO: PTI**

President Donald Trump ignited a new wave of controversy this week after branding Somali immigrants in the United States as "garbage" during a televised Cabinet meeting. The outburst — delivered with striking repetition as he said it four times in seven seconds — marked one of his most inflammatory attacks yet in a long history of denigrating rhetoric towards immigrants.

It was no slip of the tongue. Trump's language has grown steadily harsher since the early days of his political ascent, beginning with his 2015 campaign launch in which he declared that Mexico was sending "rapists" across the US border. He has since echoed rhetoric once used by Adolf Hitler, labelled the 54 nations of Africa "s—hole countries," and repeatedly tied immigrants to crime, terrorism and cultural decline.

But Tuesday's closing flourish to an otherwise routine Cabinet meeting represented an escalation. Trump claimed Somali Americans "come from hell," "contribute nothing," and "do nothing but bitch," before declaring that their "country stinks." He added that he did not want the nation's roughly 260,000 Somali-Americans in the country at all. "Let 'em go back to where they came from and fix it," he said, repeating the sentiment five times as Cabinet members applauded. Vice President JD Vance pumped his fist. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth leaned in and told the president, "Well said."

The moment stood in stark contrast to America's long self-image as a nation of immigrants, built by successive waves of newcomers yet scarred by a history of slavery, exclusion and racial hierarchies. Trump, now in his second term after winning more than 77 million votes last year, has intensified this contradiction. His administration has revived a national debate over who qualifies as American — and who the president believes should not.

MAINSTREAMING LANGUAGE ONCE SEEN AS UNACCEPTABLE

Historians say Trump's harsh language has pushed the boundaries of American political speech. Carl Bon Tempo, a history professor at the State University of New York at Albany, argues that the president has "legitimated language that, for many Americans, was long considered outside the bounds."

This shift mirrors past moments of national anxiety. Anti-Chinese agitation in the late 19th century cast Asians as unassimilable outsiders, leading to the Chinese Exclusion Act. During the Second World War, more than 1,20,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly incarcerated. The question of who "belongs" in the United States has never been settled — and Trump has pushed that tension back to the centre of politics.

A SWEEPING DRIVE TO RESTRICT IMMIGRATION

Trump has launched a whole-of-government effort to tighten immigration across the board. His order to end birthright citizenship, deeming children born to undocumented or temporary migrants ineligible for citizenship despite the 14th Amendment, is currently before the Supreme Court. His administration has drastically curtailed the asylum system, slashed the annual refugee cap, and this week froze immigration applications from citizens of 19 countries previously included in travel bans.

Immigration remains one of Trump's strongest political issues. A November AP-NORC poll found that 42 per cent of adults approved of his handling of it, slightly higher than his overall job approval, though down from earlier in the year. He has leaned into that support through near-daily enforcement announcements, nationwide ICE raids and public messaging that casts immigrants as threats.

Research shows Trump's rhetoric stands apart even within his own party. A study analysing 200,000 congressional speeches and 5,000 presidential communications on immigration between 1880 and 2020 found Trump to be "the first president in modern American history to express sentiment toward immigration that is more negative than the average member of his own party." The study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, predates his most recent comments labelling Somali Americans "garbage."

BACKLASH AT HOME AND ABROAD

Trump's remarks sparked outrage from Minneapolis to Mogadishu. Minnesota, which hosts the country's largest Somali-American population, saw swift condemnation from community groups and elected officials. Representative Ilhan Omar, a Somali-born Democrat and frequent Trump critic, said the president's "obsession" with her and with Somali Americans was "creepy and unhealthy."

In Somalia's capital, residents expressed disbelief. "I never thought a president, especially in his second term, would speak so harshly," said Ibrahim Hassan Hajji. "Because of this, I have no plans to travel to the US."

GLOBAL RIPPLE EFFECTS

Trump's approach has also influenced right-wing movements abroad. In Britain, attitudes towards migrants hardened following the Brexit referendum, a campaign in which hostility to immigration played a central role. Nigel Farage, leader of the hard-right Reform UK party, has described irregular migration as an "invasion" and warned of looming unrest.

France's Marine Le Pen and her father long built their National Rally movement on anti-immigrant messaging. But the party has softened its tone in recent years to broaden support. Under French hate-speech laws, Trump's comments about Somalis would likely be illegal if spoken by an ordinary citizen, though heads of state enjoy immunity. Still, Trump remains unmoved by domestic or international criticism. "I hear somebody say, 'Oh, that's not politically correct,'" he said during his Cabinet meeting. "I don't care. I don't want them." As Trump escalates his rhetoric and policy crackdown, he continues to shape the national conversation around immigration, widening divisions over who gets to be American, and who the president believes does not. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

NZ cops recover $19K Fabergé egg swallowed by man

AUCKLAND, 5 DEC

A diamond-studded locket, valued at NZ$33,585 (£14,600), swallowed by a 32-year-old man attempting to steal it has been "recovered" in a "natural" manner, New Zealand police reported. This incident occurred at Partridge Jewellers in central Auckland, where the suspect was arrested shortly after allegedly ingesting the locket. The Fabergé egg, adorned with 60 white diamonds and 15 blue sapphires, features an 18-carat gold miniature octopus inside. Police confirmed that "medical intervention [was] not required," and the man remains under constant monitoring as he is in custody. He has been charged with theft and is set to appear in court on 8 December. Additionally, he faces charges for stealing an iPad and cat litter from other locations. *—Agencies*

Khaleda's UK treatment delayed until Sunday

DHAKA, 5 DEC

Former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia's departure to London for urgent medical treatment has been postponed to Sunday due to an air ambulance's failure to reach Dhaka. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir stated, "If everything goes well... it may arrive tomorrow." Zia, who has been in critical condition at Evercare Hospital since 23 November, awaits approval from her medical board for her travel. This air ambulance was provided by Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. A list of 14 people, including family members and medical personnel, has been prepared to accompany her. Supporters of Zia's BNP have held prayers for her recovery, reflecting her significant political legacy and the ongoing concerns surrounding her health. *—PTI*

Suspected pirates attack ship in Bab el-Mandeb Strait

DUBAI, 5 DEC

A bulk carrier encountered an attack by suspected pirates while traversing the Bab el-Mandeb Strait on Friday, according to officials. The British military's UK Maritime Trade Operations reported that the ship was pursued by smaller vessels that opened fire. Armed guards on board responded by firing back. Fortunately, the crew remained unharmed during the ordeal. The Bab el-Mandeb Strait connects the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, separating Africa from the Arabian Peninsula. This region has seen a surge in piracy linked to the rise of attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels amidst ongoing conflict, though a ceasefire currently holds. The incident underscores the continuing maritime security challenges in these vital shipping routes. *—PTI*

Iran tests missiles near Strait of Hormuz, Oman Sea

TEHRAN, 5 DEC

Iran launched massive missiles in the Sea of Oman and near the Strait of Hormuz during the second day of a naval drill, state TV reported Friday. The report said the Revolutionary Guard launched the missiles from Iran, hitting targets in the Oman Sea and near the Strait of Hormuz. It identified the missiles as cruise Qadr-110, Qadr-380 and Ghadir that have a range of up to 2,000 km. It said the Guard also launched a ballistic missile identified as 303. This is the second drill after the Israel-Iran war in June that killed nearly 1,100 people in Iran. *—PTI*

A Russian drone strike killed a 12-year-old in Ukraine, while Kyiv struck Moscow's oil refineries on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Ukraine & US reps to meet in Miami, discuss peace plan

US to debrief Kyiv, Europe warns of betrayal

KYIV, 5 DEC

Ukraine and US delegations are set to meet in Miami on Friday to discuss the peace deal for after Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and US President Donald Trump's son-in-law met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

Ukrainian representatives led by Secretary of Ukraine's National Security, Rustem Umerov and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Andrii Hnatov, will meet US negotiation team, led by Witkoff after the nearly five hours of talks with Moscow led to "no compromise" from the Russian side.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stressed that Kyiv's priority is to obtain full clarity on what was discussed during Moscow's recent engagements and to ensure that Ukraine's interests remain central in all diplomatic efforts.

"Our task now is to obtain full information about what

- Zelenskyy said he hopes to learn how Putin continues to drag his feet in the peace talks, while leaks show that European leaders believe Trump may betray Ukraine

was said in Moscow and what other pretexts Putin has come up with to drag out the war and to pressure Ukraine," he said on X. "Ukraine is prepared for any possible development."

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin reiterated that Moscow won't compromise on its security interests, while insisting that Kyiv started the war by attempting to join NATO.

Putin added that the Ukrainian government's approach "truly resembles a neo-Nazi regime because extreme nationalism and neo-Nazism are almost indistinguishable concepts,".

US MAY BETRAY YOU: MACRON TO ZELENSKYY

French President Emmanuel Macron reportedly told Zelenskyy that "there is a chance that the US will betray Ukraine on territory, without clarity on security guarantees," a German newspaper said, quoting a leaked note it obtained from a group call.

Germany Chancellor Friedrich Merz reportedly advised Zelenskyy to "be careful" because they are "playing games with you", Der Spiegel reported.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who recently said that US President Donald Trump was the "only one" capable of ending the war, said Europe "must protect Volodymyr" (from the US).

Meanwhile, EU Defence and Space Commissioner Andrius Kubilius said that Europe needs to come up with its own peace plan, Russian agency TASS said. *—Agencies*

Congo, Rwanda sign 'peace deal': US gets rare minerals

WASHINGTON, 5 DEC

US President Donald Trump praised the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda for their courage as they signed onto a deal on Thursday aimed at ending the conflict in eastern Congo and opening the region's critical mineral reserves to the US government and American companies.

The moment offered Trump — who has repeatedly boasted of stopping wars — another chance to tout himself as a dealmaker.

"It's a great day for Africa, a great day for the world," Trump said before the signing. "We're succeeding where others have failed."

Trump welcomed Congo President Felix Tshisekedi, Rwanda President Paul Kagame the same week he called immigrants from war-torn Somalia "garbage".

> **There's tremendous wealth in those in that beautiful earth... Everybody's going to make a lot of money**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

The peace pact follows monthslong peace efforts by the US and partners, including the African Union and Qatar, and finalises an earlier deal signed in June.

However, the deal is unlikely to bring about peace. Instead, Thursday's pact will build on a Regional Economic Integration Framework previously agreed upon that will define economic partnerships of the three countries.

Trump also announced the US was signing bilateral agreements with the Congo and Rwanda that will allow the US access critical minerals.

The region is of interest to Trump as Washington looks for ways to circumvent China to acquire rare earths elements, essential to manufacturing fighter jets, cell phones and more.

Congo has been battered by decadeslong fighting with at least 100 armed groups, the most potent being the Rwanda-backed M23. People in eastern Congo said fighting intensified in recent weeks. *—PTI*

US President Donald Trump, Rwanda President Paul Kagame and Congo President Felix Tshisekedi sign a 'peace agreement' on Thursday in Washington **PHOTO: X @URUGWIROVILLAGE**

Travel ban likely on 30 countries: DHS Secretary

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said the US government is likely to increase the number of countries with travel restriction from 19 to at least 30. She told Fox News that she won't reveal the number of countries, but Trump is considering "over 30".

US kills undercover Syrian agent instead of IS member

A 19 October raid by US forces and a local Syrian group aiming to capture an Islamic State group official instead killed a Syrian man who had been working undercover gathering intelligence, family members and Syrian officials said. It happened shortly before Trump met the Syrian President.

US kills 4 on 'drug boat' as lawmakers probe legality

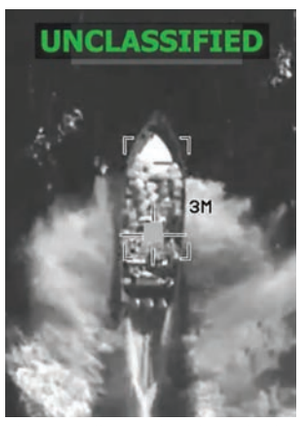
WASHINGTON, 5 DEC

US Southern Command announced that it conducted another strike against a small boat in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing four people. Thursdays strikes followed a pause of almost three weeks.

At least 87 people have been killed in the 22 strikes the military has carried out against boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean that the Trump administration claimed were trafficking drugs.

In a video that accompanied the announcement, a small boat can be seen moving across the water before it is suddenly consumed by a large explosion. The video then zooms out to show the boat covered in flames and billowing smoke.

The strike was conducted the same day Admiral Frank "Mitch" Bradley appeared for a series of closed-door classified briefings at the US Capitol as lawmakers began an investigation into the very first strike carried out by the military on 2 September. The sessions came after a report that Bradley ordered a follow-on attack that killed the survivors to comply with Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth's demands. Bradley told lawmakers there was no "kill them all" order from Hegseth.



The US strikes a 'drug boat' in the Pacific Ocean, Friday **PHOTO: WH**

Legal experts said killing survivors of a strike at sea could be a violation of military warfare laws. *—PTI*

US, Kenya sign agreement after USAID dismantling

WASHINGTON, 5 DEC

The Trump administration has signed the first in what are expected to be dozens of "America First" global health funding agreements that will prioritise combating infectious diseases in countries deemed to be aligned with the President Donald Trump's broader foreign policy goals.

The five-year, USD 2.5 billion agreement with Kenya was signed Thursday by Kenyan President William Ruto and Secretary of State Marco Rubio to replace a patchwork of previous health agreements that had traditionally been run by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) for decades until the Trump administration dismantled it this year.

The US will contribute USD 1.7 billion of the total amount, with the Kenyan government covering the remaining USD 850 million. The agreement focuses on diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. *—PTI*

Nepal PM meets with Gen Z, parties

KATHMANDU, 5 DEC

Nepal Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Friday held an interaction with representatives of political parties, officials of the Election Commission and a Gen Z group, focusing on preparations for the general election next year.

The discussion focused on issues pertinent to the preparation for the House of Representatives (HoR) election slated for 5 March, according to the Prime Minister's Office sources.

The joint meeting held at the PM's official residence at Baluwatar was attended by Election Commission officials, leaders of major political parties like the Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) and the Nepali Communist Party, Gen Z representatives and the chiefs of security agencies.

The Election Commission (EC) has called on political parties interested in contesting under the Proportional Representation electoral system for the House of Representatives election.

The EC asked the interested political parties to submit their applications from 7 December to 10 December. The list of parties submitting applications will be published on 10 December. *—PTI*

Another wave of atrocities is likely in Sudan, warns UN

GENEVA/ CAIRO, 5 DEC

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk issued a stark warning, saying he "fears another wave of atrocities in Sudan" amid a surge in fierce fighting across the Kordofan region between the government's Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N).

The RSF seized the city of el-Fasher in the North Darfur state last month, which was the last provincial capital the government held. Numerous war crimes were committed during the attacks and satellite images showed that the bodies piled on one another.

RSF has since been attacking West Kordofan state, taking control of the Babanusa town last week. The Sudan Doctors Network on Friday said hundreds of families were trapped in Babanusa, with the RSF abusing women and children.

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have reportedly been abusing women and children trapped in Sudan's Babanusa town **PHOTO: UN**

"It is truly shocking to see history repeating itself in Kordofan so soon after the horrific events in el-Fasher," said Turk. "We must not allow Kordofan to become another el-Fasher."

At least 45,000 people have fled the oil-rich Kordofan region. At risk are Kadugli and Dilling in South Kordofan el-Obeid in North Kordofan, which have been besieged by the RSF and SPLM-N, the UN warned. *—Salar News*

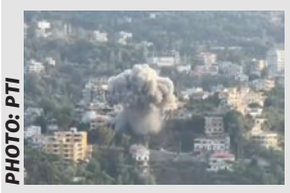


PHOTO: PTI

After peace talks, Israel strikes Lebanon

TEL AVIV, 5 DEC

Israel struck several weapons storage facilities belonging to Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, reported Israel Defence Forces (IDF). The weapons storage facilities were located in the heart of a civilian population.

"This is yet another example of Hezbollah's cynical use of Lebanese civilians as human shields," the IDF said.

The strike came after Lebanon and Israel held their first direct talks in 40 years on Wednesday.

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said these negotiations are aimed solely at the "release of Lebanese hostages", and "the complete Israeli withdrawal" from Lebanese territory.

Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, the IDF killed at least 40 Hamas militants who were trapped for months in tunnels beneath Rafah. *—ANI*

IMF mulls helping Lanka after 600 killed in cyclone

COLOMBO, 5 DEC

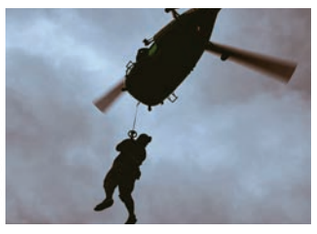


PHOTO: PTI

The IMF is exploring ways to help Sri Lanka recover after Cyclone Ditwah, which caused widespread destruction and killed around 607 people.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) spokesperson Julie Kozack said on Thursday that the IMF is "supporting Sri Lanka's recovery under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement."

Kozack conveyed her deepest sympathies to those affected by the cyclone, and said the IMF is "closely engaging" with Sri Lankan authorities to assess its damage.

"Our staff and the Sri Lankan authorities reached an agreement on the fifth review in October," she said.

Sri Lanka is grappling with widespread flooding, landslides and infrastructure collapse due to Cyclone Ditwah. At least 607 people were killed and 214 are missing.

Kozack said the IMF Board is "expected" to meet on 15 December to discuss the next review of Sri Lanka's EFF programme. Sri Lanka is expected to draw its sixth tranche of the USD 3 billion IMF bailout.

The 48-month extended fund facility deal with the IMF in March 2023 carried hard reforms. *—PTI*

BRITAIN'S CRACKDOWN

Indians among delivery agents held for working illegally in UK

COLOMBO, 5 DEC

PHOTO: AI

Indians are among 171 delivery riders caught working illegally in a UK-wide crackdown and have been detained for deportation from the country, the British government said.

The UK Home Office Immigration Enforcement teams undertook an 'Operation Equalise' over seven days last month, which involved stopping to check the documents of delivery riders operating in villages, towns and cities across Britain.

Those found to be working illegally, which also included Bangladeshi and Chinese nationals, were arrested on the spot and detained for removal to the countries of their origin.

The Home Office said the crackdowns form part of Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood's "sweeping reforms" to tackle illegal migration in Britain, which includes increasing deportations.

The Home Department said that four riders of Bangladeshi and Indian nationality were arrested for illegal working and detained for removal on 17 November and three riders of Indian nationality were arrested with two detained for removal.

The government claims its enforcement action to disrupt illegal working last year reached "record breaking levels", with over 11,000 checks and 8,000 arrests – a 51 per cent and 63 per cent rise, respectively. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold jumps Rs 1,300 to Rs 1.32L/10g

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Gold prices jumped by Rs 1,300 to Rs 1,32,900 per 10g in the national capital on Friday amid firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,31,600 per 10g on Thursday. In the local bullion market, silver surged by Rs 3,500 to Rs 1,83,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from previous close of Rs 1,80,000 per kg. In the international market, spot gold increased by USD 15.10, or 0.36 per cent, to USD 4,223.76 per ounce, while silver was trading 1.82 per cent higher at USD 58.17 per ounce. *—PTI*

Noel Tata's mother Simone Tata dies at 95

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

Simone Tata, 95, mother of Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata and stepmother of the late Ratan Tata, died at a Mumbai hospital after a brief illness. She was long associated with both philanthropic and business work. She contributed to the growth of Lakmé Cosmetics and laying the foundation for fashion retail Westside chain. The Switzerland-born Simone also guided the work of many philanthropic organisations, including the Sir Ratan Tata Institute. A positive outlook and a deep resolve helped Simone overcome many challenges in her life. Last respects to Simone Tata will be offered on Saturday, 6 December, at the Cathedral of the Holy Name in Colaba, followed by a mass at 11am. *—PTI*

Ola Electric to hire 1,000 senior service technicians

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Ola Electric is preparing to recruit about 1,000 senior service technicians and specialised professionals as the company moves into the next phase of its Hyperservice programme. Unlike a typical hiring expansion, the upcoming drive focuses on senior and specialist roles - from EV diagnostics experts to service centre managers and customer-facing advisors. The expansion will substantially bolster the firm's after-sales workforce, following weeks of rapid-response efforts to clear service backlogs in key markets. Insiders say the objective is to upgrade capability rather than merely increase headcount. Hyperservice, launched earlier this year, is rolling out in phases - first clearing pending jobs with a surge team, then reinforcing day-to-day service through stronger processes, staffing, and digital tools. *—PTI*

Andhra clears ₹4,000 cr ReNew's solar, water facility

AMARAVATI, 5 DEC

Andhra Pradesh State Investment Promotion Board, headed by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has approved a Rs 4,000-crore solar ingot and wafer production facility by ReNew Photovoltaics at Rambilli in Anakapalli district. The 6 GW greenfield facility will manufacture the core building blocks used in solar cells and modules. The project aims to reduce India's dependence on imported components and support the country's ambitious renewable energy goals. Backed by the Centre's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for solar manufacturing, the facility will utilise 140 acres of land. Expected to be completed by March 2026, with commercial production beginning in January 2028. The unit will create around 1,200 high-skilled and semi-skilled jobs, requiring 95 MW of continuous power supply and 10 MLD of water. *—PTI*

RBI to pump Rs 1L crore into banking system

RBI to do a 3-yr USD/INR buy-sell swap of $5B this month

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

The Reserve Bank on Friday decided to conduct Open Market Operation (OMO) purchases of government securities of Rs 1 lakh crore this month in a bid to maintain sufficient liquidity in the system.

Besides, the central bank will do a 3-year USD/INR buy-sell swap of USD 5 billion this month to inject durable liquidity.

These measures would help mitigate the liquidity crunch in view of the outgo from the banking system towards the third instalment advance tax payments due on December 15.

Providing assurance to the market, Malhotra said, "We are committed to providing sufficient durable liquidity to the banking system. We continuously assess the durable liquidity requirements of the banking system due to changes in currency in circulation, forex operations, and reserve maintenance."

Additionally, stressing that RBI does not target any level of rupee against the US dollar, he said the central bank allows "the rupee find its correct position, correct level".

The governor further said the country has sufficient foreign exchange reserves and the current account is manageable, and given the strong fundamentals of the economy, the country should witness good capital flows going forward.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) to India recorded a net outflow of USD 0.7 billion in 2025-26, so far (April- 3 December), due to unabated withdrawal from the equity segment.

As of 28 November, 2025, India's foreign exchange reserves stood at USD 686.2 billion, providing a robust import cover of more than 11 months.

Separately, real estate industry bodies CREDAI and NAREDCO on Friday said RBI's move to cut repo rate by 25 basis points would lead to reduction in interest rates on home loans and boost housing demand.

The central bank has slashed key benchmark interest rate for the first time in six months and took steps to boost liquidity to support a "goldilocks" economy in the face of high US tariffs.

Meanwhile, the RBI will launch a two-month campaign beginning next month to resolve all grievances pending for more than a month with the Ombudsman. *—PTI*

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AMID RBI RATE CUT

Rupee falls 6 paise to close at 89.95 against USD

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

The rupee on Friday gave up its initial gains and settled for the day lower by 6 paise at 89.95 against the US dollar, after the Reserve Bank cut the key benchmark interest rate for the first time in six months.

Forex traders said the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) rate cut will weigh on the rupee, but RBI's decision to purchase government bonds worth up to Rs 1 lakh crore through open market operations (OMO), combined with a USD 5 billion buy-sell swap, will support the local currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 89.85 against the US dollar and gained ground, touching 89.69 in morning deals, registering a 20-paise gain from its previous close.

After the RBI's monetary policy announcement, the rupee lost ground and fell to 90.06 against the American currency, a 16-paise decline from its previous close of 89.89. The currency is down almost 5 per cent against the dollar this year, the worst performer in Asia.

The local unit finally settled for the day lower by 6 paise at 89.95 against the American currency.

The RBI on Friday cut the key benchmark interest rate for the first time in six months and took steps to boost liquidity to support a "goldilocks" economy amid high US tariffs.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.03 per cent lower at 98.96.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.02 per cent to USD 63.27 per barrel in futures trade. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Stock mkts rally after RBI cuts interest rate

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rallied on Friday after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut key benchmark interest rate for the first time in six months and took steps to boost liquidity to support a "goldilocks" economy in the face of high US tariffs.

Rising for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 447.05 points, or 0.52 per cent, to settle at 85,712.37. During the day, it jumped 531.4 points, or 0.62 per cent, to 85,796.72.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 152.70 points, or 0.59 per cent, to 26,186.45.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark eked out a marginal gain of 5.7 points, while the Nifty dipped 16.5 points.

The six-member monetary policy committee, led by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, voted unanimously to lower the repurchase or repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25 per cent and retained a neutral stance, which gives room for further rate cuts.

From the Sensex firms, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Maruti, HCL Tech, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and Infosys were among the major winners.

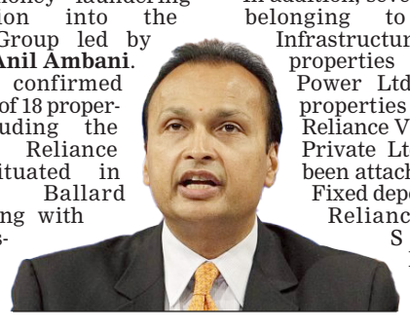
However, Hindustan Unilever, Eternal, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, and Sun Pharma were among the laggards.

Rate-sensitive stocks -- bank, auto and realty -- ended higher.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.21 per cent, while smallcap index declined 0.67 per cent. However, BSE Services, capital goods, industrials and FMCG were the laggards. *—PTI*

ED attaches assets worth Rs 1,120 cr against Reliance

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC



The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached fresh assets valued at Rs 1,120 crore as part of its ongoing money laundering investigation into the Reliance Group led by chairman **Anil Ambani**.

Officials confirmed that a total of 18 properties, including the prominent Reliance Centre situated in Mumbai's Ballard Estate, along with fixed deposits, bank balances, and shareholdings in unquoted investments of the Reliance Anil Ambani Group, have been affected under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

In addition, seven properties belonging to Reliance Infrastructure Ltd, two properties of Reliance Power Ltd, and nine properties linked to Reliance Value Service Private Ltd have also been attached.

Fixed deposits held by Reliance Value Service Private Ltd, Reliance Venture Asset Management Private Ltd, Phi Management Solutions Private Ltd, Adhar Property Consultancy Pvt Ltd, and Gamesa Investment Management Private Ltd, as well as investments made by Reliance Venture Asset Management Private Ltd, have also been implicated.

Previously, the ED had attached assets worth over Rs 8,997 crore related to fraud cases involving Reliance Communications Ltd.

Consequently, the total value of assets attached in the case against the Reliance Group now stands at Rs 10,117 crore. *—PTI*

Adani's Dighi port to handle 2 lakh cars a year

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) on Friday announced that its subsidiary, Dighi Port Ltd (DPL) in Maharashtra, is set to handle 2,00,000 cars per year following a new partnership with Motherson.

The collaboration will position Dighi Port as the key automobile export terminal for Mumbai-based exporters supplying the Pune auto belt.

As one of APSEZ's 15 strategic ports, Dighi is expected to expand its capabilities to support India's automotive growth under the Make in India initiative, enabling smooth export and import of vehicles for global markets.

Motherson, through its joint venture Samvardhana Motherson Hamakyorex Engineered Logistics Limited (SAMRX), has signed an agreement with Dighi Port to establish a dedicated auto-export facility at the Maharashtra port.

Commenting on the partnership, APSEZ CEO and Wholetime Director Ashwani Gupta said: "By combining APSEZ's integrated infrastructure capabilities with Motherson's expertise, we are creating a seamless and resilient network for vehicle movement across the country."

Strategically located on India's west coast, Dighi Port serves as a gateway to Maharashtra's landlocked industrial corridors. *—PTI*

EU fines Musk's X with ₹120M

LONDON, 5 DEC

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

European Union regulators on Friday fined **Elon Musk**'s social media platform X 120 million euros (USD 140 million) for failing to comply with the bloc's digital regulations.

The European Commission issued its decision following an investigation it opened two years ago into X under the 27-nation bloc's Digital Services Act.

Also known as the DSA, its a sweeping rulebook that requires platforms to take more responsibility for protecting European users and cleaning up harmful or illegal content and products on their sites, under threat of hefty fines.

The Commission said it was punishing X, previously known as Twitter, because of three different breaches of the DSA's transparency requirements. The decision could rile President Donald Trump, whose administration has lashed out at digital regulations from Brussels and vowed to retaliate if American tech companies are penalised.

Regulators said X's blue checkmarks broke the rules because of their "deceptive design" that could expose users to scams and manipulation.

X also fell short of the requirements for its ad database and giving access to researchers access to public data. *—PTI*

NETFLIX

NETFLIX TO BUY WARNER BROS FOR $72B

NEW YORK, 5 DEC

Netflix has struck a deal with Warner Bros Discovery to buy the legacy Hollywood giant's studio and streaming business for USD 72 billion.

The acquisition, announced Friday, would bring two of the industry's biggest players in film and TV under one roof.

Beyond its namesake television and motion picture division, Warner owns HBO Max and DC Studios. And Netflix has risen to dominance as a household name ubiquitous to on-demand content, while building of its own production arm to release popular titles like "Stranger Things" and "Squid Game."

The cash and stock deal is valued at USD 27.75 per Warner share, giving it a total enterprise value of approximately USD 82.7 billion.

The transaction is expected to close after Warner separates Discovery Global into a new publicly-traded company in the third quarter of 2026. *—PTI*

Sagar Defence launches Uncrewed Surface Vehicles plant in Pune

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

An Indian defence firm has inaugurated a new plant in Pune that will manufacture Uncrewed Surface Vehicles (USVs), marking a "major step forward" in partnership with a US company, which was announced earlier this year to co-develop and co-produce advanced maritime systems, an official statement said on Friday.

The new plant underscores the shared commitment of Liquid Robotics, a Boeing company, and Sagar Defence Engineering to strengthening India's defence industrial base, it said.

It will manufacture USVs, marking a major step forward in the partnership with Liquid Robotics that was announced earlier this year to co-develop and co-produce advanced maritime systems, the statement said.The USVs manufactured at this facility will enhance undersea domain awareness through local production and will build capacity for the Wave Glider platform.

Liquid Robotics designs and manufactures the Wave Glider - "the most experienced and proven USV". Powered exclusively by wave and solar energy, "the Wave Glider stays on mission 24×7 for several months at a time, providing real-time data and communications for a variety of applications", the statement said. Shane Goodenough, CEO, Liquid Robotics, said the inauguration of the plant is a "critical step" in its collaboration with Sagar Defence. *—PTI*

India's forex reserves drop by $1.88B to $686B

MUMBAI, 5 DEC

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 1.877 billion to USD 686.227 billion during the week ended 28 November, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined by USD 4.472 billion to USD 688.104 billion.

For the week ended 28 November, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 3.569 billion to USD 557.031 billion, the data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 63 million to USD 18.628 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was also up by USD 16 million to USD 4.772 billion in the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data. *—PTI*

India in talks with 8 nations for UPI: FinMin

NEW DELHI, 5 DEC

India is in discussions with around eight countries, including several in East Asia, to enable acceptance of its Unified Payments Interface (UPI) abroad, Financial Services Secretary **M Nagaraju** said on Friday.

Currently, UPI is accepted in eight countries: Bhutan, Singapore, Qatar, Mauritius, Nepal, UAE, Sri Lanka, and France. Expanding UPI internationally will allow Indian tourists to make digital payments seamlessly while travelling overseas.

Speaking at a conference on "Harnessing AI and Digital Public Infrastructure for Viksit Bharat," Nagaraju highlighted that India is integrating UPI into trade negotiations with partner countries.

"Some of the trade negotiations we are pursuing now include a track on UPI, so that the fintech industry, which is deeply involved in UPI, can also have a presence in the financial sector," he said. "India has the advantage of cost and scale in this sector, and we want to leverage that to benefit the country."

The initiative reflects India's broader strategy to promote its digital payment ecosystem internationally, strengthen fintech collaboration. *—PTI*

2ND OUTAGE IN A MONTH

LinkedIn, Zoom, Groww hit amid Cloudflare outage

MADRID, 5 DEC

Internet infrastructure company Cloudflare on Friday said it was investigating an outage that took place in the morning that brought down several global websites including LinkedIn, Zoom, Groww, Zerodha and others, the second such crash to affect the company in less than three weeks.

Cloudflare said the issue had been resolved, and that it was was "investigating issues with Cloudflare Dashboard and related APIs," or application programming interface that allow software systems to communicate with each other.

Users on social media platform X also reported problems accessing the website.

Edinburgh airport had to shut down briefly on Friday morning.

But the airport said the outage was a localised issue that was not related to the outage by Cloudflare.

In November, a Cloudflare outage affected users of everything from ChatGPT and the online game, "League of Legends," to the New Jersey Transit system.

Last month Microsoft had to deploy a fix to address an outage of their Azure cloud portal that left users unable to access Office 365, Minecraft and other services.

Amazon also experienced a massive outage of its cloud computing service in October. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Shafali named ICC Women's player of month

DUBAI, 5 DEC

India opener Shafali Verma, whose blazing 87 and two key wickets powered the country to its maiden ICC Women's World Cup title, was on Friday named in the ICC Player of the Month shortlist for November. Shafali, drafted into the squad as an injury replacement, delivered a match-winning all-round performance in the final against South Africa in Mumbai, earning the Player of the Match award and now a place among the three nominees for the monthly honour. She is joined on the women's list by Esha Oza of the UAE and Thailand's Thipatcha Putthawong, both standout performers in the inaugural ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy held in Bangkok.—*PTI*

Bengaluru to host India-Netherlands Davis Cup tie in Feb

BENGALURU, 5 DEC

Bengaluru was on Friday awarded the hosting rights for the upcoming India-Netherlands Davis Cup Qualifiers tie on February 7-8, pipping Delhi in the bidding.Delhi Lawn Tennis Association (DLTA), which hosted Togo in February this year, had also expressed interest in conducting the crucial tie. Bengaluru last hosted a Davis Cup tie back in 2017 against Uzbekistan, with the hosts winning 4-1.Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) had recently hosted the Billie Jean King Cup Play-offs in the city.India beat Switzerland in round one of World Group I in September to reach the Qualifiers stage, while the Netherlands lost by the same margin to Argentina in the second round of the Qualifiers.—*PTI*

Olympic diver Lyskun stripped of titles by Ukraine

MOSCOW, 5 DEC

Ukraine's diving federation said it has stripped Sofiia Lyskun of her titles following her decision to switch allegiance to Russia. The 23-year-old, who represented Ukraine at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the Paris Games last year, revealed the switch in an interview with a Russian newspaper earlier this week. The federation said Lyskun had not informed them, her coaching staff, or Ukraine's sports ministry about her decision. "Such steps are categorically unacceptable," it said in a statement. "They discredit not only an individual athlete, but also the entire team of Ukraine, which every day selflessly fights for the right to represent our country in the international arena.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@NBA

NBA: Jordan to testify in NASCAR antitrust case

NEW YORK, 5 DEC

Michael Jordan and Joe Gibbs' daughter-in-law were expected to testify Friday on the fifth day of the federal antitrust case the Basketball Hall of Famer filed against NASCAR over claims the series has acted as monopolistic bullies. Heather Gibbs, the chief operating officer of Joe Gibbs Racing, wrote an impassioned letter to NASCAR chairman Jim France in May 2024, imploring him to make charters permanent for the sake of strengthening the family business. Charters are the equivalent of the franchise model used in other sports, and in NASCAR.—*PTI*

India hopes for another 'Ro-Ko' show

India has a wonderful record here, seven wins in 10 ODIs from 2005

VISAKHAPATNAM, 5 DEC

INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA ODI

INDIA vs SOUTH AFRICA
Match starts at
1.30 pm IST

HEAD TO HEAD @ VISAKHAPATNAM

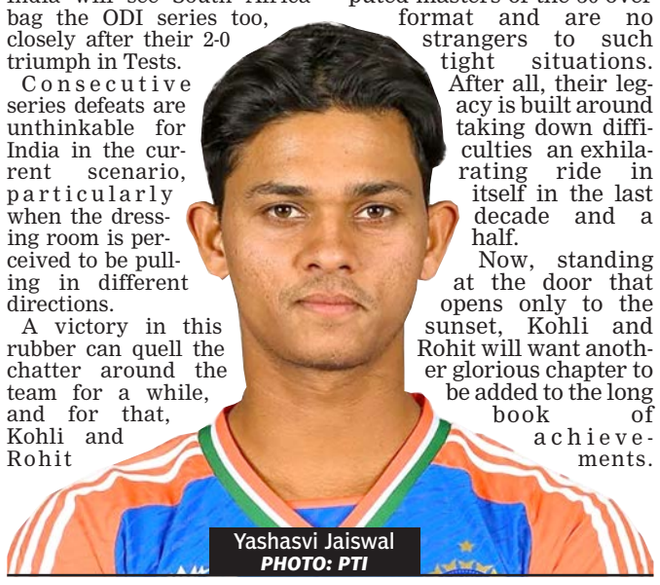
PLAYED:	95
SA WON:	52
INDIA WON:	40
NO RESULT	3

The spotlight, like most times, will be on Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, but the pressure will also be on India's younger crop when the home side looks to avoid another embarrassing series loss to South Africa in the must-win third and final ODI here on Saturday.

A Raipur-like fumbling by India will see South Africa bag the ODI series too, closely after their 2-0 triumph in Tests.

Consecutive series defeats are unthinkable for India in the current scenario, particularly when the dressing room is perceived to be pulling in different directions.

A victory in this rubber can quell the chatter around the team for a while, and for that, Kohli and Rohit have to do the heavy lifting once again.



Yashasvi Jaiswal
PHOTO: PTI

Both have been the undisputed masters of the 50-over format and are no strangers to such tight situations. After all, their legacy is built around taking down difficulties an exhilarating ride in itself in the last decade and a half.

Now, standing at the door that opens only to the sunset, Kohli and Rohit will want another glorious chapter to be added to the long book of achievements. It's not a mere ambition either.

The pitch at the ACA-VDCA stadium often tends to favour the batters, and **India have a wonderful record here, seven wins in 10 ODIs from 2005**, even though the last encounter against Australia ended in a defeat.

But they would not complain about some meaningful support from the younger batters as it came forth in the last match through Ruturaj Gaikwad, who struck his maiden ODI hundred.

But Yashasvi Jaiswal is still to find his range in this series as an opener, and the gifted young man will be keen to convert his starts into a bigger score, for his and the team's sake.

There is an obvious flaw in his batting against left-arm quicks, be it Jayden Seales of the West Indies or Marco Jansen and Nandre Burger in this series.

There is a slight desperation to win ODI series: Ryan ten Doeschate

Assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate on Friday said a below-par performance in the preceding Test series has put a certain amount of "desperation" in the Indian team to win the ongoing ODI series against South Africa.

India lost the two-match Test rubber 0-2 to the Proteas recently, and the one-day series is now levelled at 1-1.

"It's a very different personnel of players, but the guys are very aware of the responsibility of what they're representing," ten Doeschate said here on the eve of the series-deciding third ODI. KL Rahul's side won the first match at Ranchi by 17 runs, but SA pulled one back at Raipur with a four-wicket victory. —*PTI*

Shai and Justin defy a depleted NZ team

CHRISTCHURCH, 5 DEC

A New Zealand team with a crowded medical ward met stiff resistance and was unable to finish off the West Indies on the fourth day of the first test, Friday, after setting the tourists 531 to win.

Shai Hope led the resistance with his fourth test century in an unbroken partnership of 140 with Justin Greaves, which began when New Zealand captured four wickets relatively quickly in the second session.

Shai Hope scored his fourth Test hundred
PHOTO: PTI

At stumps, Hope was 116 not out, Greaves was 55 not out, and the West Indies were 212-4, trailing New Zealand by 319 runs. Wicketkeeper Tom Blundell was unable to bat because of a hamstring injury, and all-rounder Nathan Smith was inactive with a side strain.Matt Henry bowled 11 overs in the West Indies' second innings before leaving to visit the hospital, handily adjacent to Hagley Oval, for scans on a painful calf muscle.

To add injury to injury, Hope is still affected by a serious eye infection, which has forced him to bat in sunglasses in both innings, to make a half-century in the first innings and a century. He was unable to field for most of New Zealand's second innings and needed antibiotic eye drops.That made his effort throughout the fourth day all the more meritorious as the medical staff of both teams were kept busily employed.

West Indies 167 and 212 for 4 (Hope 116*, Greaves 55*, Duffy 2-60) trail New Zealand 231 and 466 for 8 dec (Ravindra 176, Latham 145, Roach 5-78) by 319 runs. —*PTI*

ASHES 2ND TEST 2025-26

Weatherald's opening gambit inspires Australia fightback

BRISBANE, 5 DEC

A relentless Australia seized a 44-run lead over England in the day-night second Ashes Test in Brisbane on Friday, with aggressive opener Jake Weatherald and Steve Smith leading the charge.

Jake Weatherald
PHOTO: PTI

By stumps, the hosts had not only reeled in England's first-innings 334 but raced clear, ending a draining day two on 378-6 in front of a big and boisterous crowd at a humid Gabba. A decent lead is shaping as crucial, with the pitch likely to deteriorate in the coming days."That was a crucial last hour there for us. To get to the end of play six down gives us a bit of time in the morning in that day's session," said Marnus Labuschagne, who cracked 65.

At stumps, Alex Carey, who was dropped first ball and again on 25, was not out on 46 with Michael Neser on 15, but England's pace cartel made inroads under lights in the evening session.Australia was cruising at 291-3 before the expensive Brydon Carse removed Cameron Green (45) and Smith (61) in four deliveries to rekindle hope as England's short-ball tactics paid off.Weatherald, in only his second Test, slammed 12 fours and a six in a punchy knock before being trapped lbw by Jofra Archer with an angled yorker. Labuschagne Australia's form batsman with a slew of centuries in domestic cricket was similarly assured as the shadows moved over the ground.But as he looked destined for another ton, England captain Ben Stokes got the crucial breakthrough with a nick to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith.

"Obviously, the boys played well," said Labuschagne. "We probably let them in a little bit there through that middle session, but it's a nice day."

Australia 378 for 6 (Weatherald 72, Labuschagne 65, Smith 61, Carse 3-113) lead England 334 (Root 138*, Starc 6-75) by 44 runs. —*PTI*

INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM BEATS IRELAND 4-0

CHILE, 5 DEC

India came away with a 4-0 win in the Ireland U21 Women's final FIH Junior World Cup Pool Stage match in Chile on Friday. Despite a huge effort from the side, India built a gradual lead, scoring after 12 and 42 minutes before two late goals extended their lead to four.

India applied the pressure from the off, but Ireland were more than up for the task as they kept the Indian attackers at bay. An early penalty corner forced Ireland into defensive duties, which they cleared, but India eventually broke the deadlock in the 12th minute through Siwach Kanika.India won a penalty corner early in the second quarter, calling Lucy McGoldrick into action to make a super save. India went up the other end winning a penalty corner. —*PTI*

India beats Belgium to qualify for semifinals

CHENNAI, 5 DEC

India defeated Belgium 4-3 in a shootout in the last quarterfinal of the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup in Chennai on Friday.

Sharda Nand Tiwari and captain Rohit were on the scoresheet for India as the contest ended 2-2 in regulation time. Goalkeeper Princedeep then made two saves in the shootout to seal the victory.

The home side will now face defending champion Germany in the last four.

Belgium drew first blood when Cournez Massant Gaspard blasted the board with a reverse-stick hit in the 13th minute. India found the leveller just seconds before the third quarter ended as Rohit deflected a drag flick into the goal.

Spain, Argentina, Germany qualify for SFs

Spain set up a semifinal clash against Argentina, while defending champion Germany overcame a spirited French defence in the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Hockey Junior World Cup 2025 at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium on Friday. The day's first quarterfinal delivered a thrilling spectacle as Spain narrowly defeated New Zealand 4-3, sealing its spot in the semifinals.—*PTI*

Norris lays down early marker ahead of F1 title shootout

ABU DHABI, 5 DEC

The Formula 1 title fight is Lando Norris' to lose, and he doesn't look like losing. The British driver went fastest in both of Friday's practice sessions as he laid down a marker ahead of the three-way title decider at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Norris beat title rival Max Verstappen by just .008 of a second in the first session and stretched that gap over the Red Bull driver to .363 in the second, which was more representative of the day-night conditions for Sunday's race.

Norris leads Verstappen by 12 points and teammate Oscar Piastri by 16. —*PTI*

SQUASH INDIAN TOUR

SENTHILKUMAR AND ANAHAT EMERGE CHAMPIONS

CHENNAI, 5 DEC

National champions Velavan Senthilkumar and Anahat Singh clinched the men's and women's titles respectively at the Squash Indian Tour 4, which concluded at the Indian Squash Academy here on Friday.

Top seed and World No. 46 Senthilkumar overcame Egypt's Adam Hawal 11-7, 11-9, 9-11, 11-4 to lift the men's crown.

The Chennai player displayed superior control in the closing stages to quell the challenge of the rising Egyptian.

In the women's final, Delhi teenager and World No. 29 Anahat Singh battled past former World No. 10 and veteran compatriot Joshna Chinappa in a pulsating five-game contest, winning 11-8, 11-13, 11-13, 11-6, 11-8. This was Anahat's second straight victory over the seasoned campaigner after the Daly College Indian Open last month.

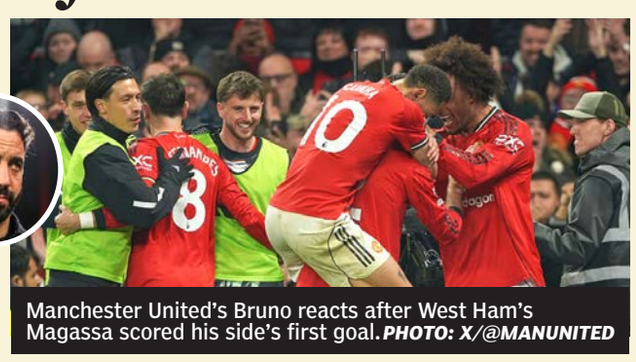
Velavan Senthilkumar and Anahat Singh, right, clinched the men's and women's titles at the Squash Indian Tour PHOTO: PTI

"Nice to see rising talent from here," said Joshna, 39, acknowledging Anahat's impressive run.Senthilkumar, Anahat, Joshna, and Abhay Singh will represent India at the Squash World Cup, which begins here next week. —*PTI*

MAN UTD 1-1 WEST HAM

Anger and frustration at Old Trafford

MANCHESTER, 5 DEC



Manchester United's Bruno reacts after West Ham's Magassa scored his side's first goal. PHOTO: X/@MANUNITED

An "angry" Ruben Amorim watched Manchester United blow a chance to rise to fifth in the Premier League when West Ham salvaged a late 1-1 draw at Old Trafford.

Soungoutou Magassa's 83rd-minute equaliser cancelled out Diogo Dalot's opening goal that had put United on course to move level on points with fourth-place Chelsea.

Bruno Fernandes squandered two chances to score a winner in added time — blazing a shot wide from inside the box and then volleying another off target.

United coach Amorim said afterwards he was "frustrated" and "angry" after seeing his team drop more points.

"We are really inconsistent," he said.

"If you look at the goal at 83 minutes, we have a long ball, we have everything under control, we need to do better."

United has only won one of its last five games, drawing three.

Despite that run, it had the opportunity to move within reach of the Champions League places. And that looked likely when, in the 58th, Casemiro's long-range shot was controlled in the box by Dalot.

The United defender then spun and powered a shot past West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola.

It was a game of few chances, with West Ham rarely threatening to find an equaliser. But a late corner saw Jarrod Bowen's flicked header cleared off the line by Noussair Mazraoui. —*PTI*

It's very difficult to win a World Cup: Lionel Messi

FLORIDA, 5 DEC

Messi acknowledged the immense difficulty of defending the World Cup title, noting that Argentina will now be the team everyone wants to beat.

"Winning took a huge weight off our shoulders. Playing without that pressure is a relief, but at the same time, it doesn't guarantee anything," he cautioned.

"It's very difficult to win a World Cup. Small details can leave you out. Any national team can complicate things."

While he remains hopeful of participating in the 2026 tournament, he made no firm commitment. "I hope I can be there.

"I've said before that I'd love to be there," Messi concluded. "At worst, I'll be there watching it live, but it will be special. The World Cup is special for everyone."

While his participation as a player remains uncertain, Messi confirmed he has discussed a potential future role with Scaloni for the 2026 World Cup.

The truth is we've been talking about it," he revealed.—*PTI*